Hhh. 22

THE PERFECTION, AUTHORITY, And CREDIBILITY Of the Holy *SCRIPTURES.*

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Discoursed in a SERMON before the *University* of *CAMBRIDGE*, At the *Commencement*, July 4. 1658.

By NATHANAEL INGELO D. D. and Fellow of *Eton* Coll.

In his scriptis veritas non concescit, sed statim de prelo purissima commendata testa suum saporem servat. Hieron. Præf. in lib. Salom.

Δεῖ γὰρ καὶ γινόντι τὸ παρασχόσθαι εἰς πίστιν τοῦ λεγομένου. Iambl. in vit. Pyth. cap. 28.

LONDON,
Printed by *E. T.* for *Luke Fawn* at the Sign of the *Parrot* in *Pauls* Church-yard, 1659.

258.09

TO THE

Right Worſhipfull

Doctor,

JOHN WORTHINGTON

Vice-Chancellour,

And the reſt of the Heads,

Together

With the Fellowes, of the ſeverall Colledges in the Univerſity of *CAMBRIDGE.*

Right Worſhipfull and Reverend,

I *Have made bold to prefixe your* Names *to this ſhort* Diſcourſe, *ſince you were pleaſed to* honour *it with your*

courteous acceptance, *I cannot but pay it down as your own by* grateful acknowledgment. *The* Benignity *of which I have had experience, makes me* confident *the ſecond time: your* Candor *takes off thoſe* feares, *which otherwiſe I ſhould juſtly entertaine, upon the thoughts of your* Judgement. *I have here repreſented to your eyes what you heard, with a ſmall addition of ſome things, which could not conveniently be ſpoken for want of time, which was then more then ordinarily, but very juſtly, ſhortened by the* Commemoration.

My deſigne in the choice of this Argument *was not to inform you*; ὑμᾶς γὰρ γνησίως ἀρετῆς φύλακας καθαρᾷς πανδύσεως ὀφθαλμοὶς ὁ λόγος φωτίζει;

φωτίζει; *But, as it is one of the great* Truths *taught by our* learned *and* pious Mother, *of whom I received it, and confirmed with the testimony of all* Protestant Churches, *so when I weighed the* Importance *of it, I thought there was scarce any thing, that could be known, more* necessary, *and considering some things, which I shall by and by set down, I judged it not* unseasonable.

I was satisfied as to the Importance *of it, since it includes the* Fundamentall concernments of Christian Religion *and the opening of it discovers the strong* Pillars *upon which it leanes, and shewes written upon them* clear testimonies, *that it came from* God;

by the conſideration of which, well meaning *Chriſtians will ſtrengthen a* rationall belief *in God, and eaſily perceive that* Unbelievers, *of what ſort ſoever, are not ſuch, becauſe the* Chriſtian Religion *doth not give proofe of its Truth, but becauſe they have either by ſome ſad miſ-hap loſt the faculty of believing moſt neceſſary Truths, or becauſe ſomething or other doth hinder them from conſidering that which is more then ſufficiently credible.*

Not that I preſume to comprehend all thoſe things which belong to the full explication of ſo great a matter, much leſſe to compriſe them in this ſmall Treatiſe (for that I may ſay with Alexander Aphrod.

ῥᾴδιον πάντα γνώριμα ποιῆσαι δι' ἑνὸς βιβλίου, αὐτά τε προκείμενα, καὶ οἷς τὶς χρῆται πρὸς τὴν μήνυσιν αὐτῶν) but *however it will briefly exhibit several things towards the* vindication *of divine* Truth *from* Atheistical unbelievers, *for the* justification *of our* profession *against* Romish aspersions, *some of which are foul enough; and take off that which is said against the* perfection *of the* Scriptures *by* dreaming Enthusiasts; *and so may possibly contribute something to* undeceive *some which are in errour, or* rescue *from temptation an endangered soule.*

Indeed the comprehensive sence of this Truth, That the holy Scripture does perfectly contain, and plainly discover

all things neceſſary to ſalvation, *doth include the* Defence *of* our Saviours honour, *the* Demonſtration *of the* Grace *and* Wiſdome *of the divine* Providence, *and the* Churches ſecurity *in point of* ſalvation.

As for the honour of our Lord and Saviour, *how ſhall that be ſafe, if it can be proved, that when he came to declare* Gods mind *to us, he went home again, having done but* half his errand? *if being to write an* Epiſtle *from God to us, he left ſome of the* main concernments *of it, to be ſupplied in a* Poſtſcript, *to be written by any that would take up his Pen? and being about to make his own* will, *he was ſo forgetful of that which is to be done in ſuch a*

matter,

matter, that he left out many principal *things, to be inſerted in* unatteſted poſthumous Codicills?

But it was quite otherwiſe; for Chriſt in the cloſe of his Sermons *declareth plainly, that he had* perfected *the Revelation of* neceſſary Doctrine, *ſaying a little before his Death, Go and preach what I have taught you, and thoſe which believe, ſhall be ſaved.*

And for the Grace and Wiſdome of divine Providence, *how can they but ſuffer, if God, pretending a great love to the happineſſe of Man-kind, hath either not* appointed ſufficient means *for their ſalvation, or not let them* know what *and* where *it is? If the* Scriptures

be

be not plain, *what wiſdom was it to write our higheſt concernments in ſuch words as we cannot underſtand? If they be not* perfect, *how is his* good will reall? *for having given us but an* imperfect *notice of our way there, he doth not mention any* power *to make the* ſupply, *nor ſay whom he would* intruſt *with it.*

From both of theſe, the inſecurity of our ſalvation is a neceſſary conſequence. *For how ſhall we attain ſo* great an end, *with* uncertain *and* inſufficient meanes? *But as our* Maſter, that would have all men to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth, *taught all that Truth before he left this world, ſo the* Evangeliſt Luke,

in

in his Preface *to the Hiſtory of the* Acts of the Apoſtles, *affirmes that what* Chriſt *taught before his* death, *and till the* Aſcenſion was written by himſelf, *not long after.*

The Truth of theſe things doth ſo diſtreſſe thoſe that endeavour to believe againſt it, that they are fain to ſummon their wits to find evaſions from the mighty power of it. To ſalve *the* Honour of our Maſter, *one whom* Creſſy *ſelects as the incomparable aſſertor of Roman opinions, and therefore chuſeth him for the chief guide of his Apoſtaſie from the Proteſtant Church (having rejected* Caſſander, Padre Paulo & Picherellus, *for their* moderation, *and forgotten that, ten Chapters before,*

Exomologeſis. Cap. 32.

Cap. 22.

before, he profeſſed to chuſe ſuch as had expreſſed themſelves moſt moderately, *and* allowing the greateſt latitude) *viz.* Stapleton *ſayes,* ✱ *That, what they adde to the Scriptures, is not* aliud à Chriſto (quod eſſet ab illo recedere) ſed à Scripturis. *A pretty Sophiſme! As if the ſubjects of a lawful Prince, making ſuch additions as they pleaſe to his Lawes, could defend themſelves by ſaying they added not* aliud à Rege, ſed à Legibus, (i. e.) *a ſubject doth not derogate from the Kings Honour, though he accuſe his* Government *of* Imperfection, *and his* Lawes *of* Inſufficiencie.

✱ *Præf. Relect. princip. fidei doctrinalium,* Printed a year after Doctor *Whittakers death.*

To avoid this Imputation, *he ſayes, as his* Partners *do, that Chriſt made* Delegates, *and gave*

gave them authority *to teach* other *things beſides the* Scriptures, (præter illas multa docere.) *But as this* power *is very great* (*for he ſayes of it*, Tantum ſane ac tale eſt eorum miniſterium, ut eorum vox, doctrina, teſtimonium fundamenti vice nobis eſſet, non ſecus atque ipſius vox, doctrina, teſtimonium fundamentum veritatis fuit, (*i.e.*) That their word, doctrine, and teſtimony, is no leſſe a foundation to us, then the Word, Doctrine, and Teſtimony of Chriſt, is the foundation of Truth:) *So being well aware, that whoſoever ſhould lay claim to it, either thoſe* fifty bold mercenaries at Trent, *who called themſelves an* Oecumenical Councell, *any* *Ibid.*

other Assembly *of* Papists, *the* Pope in his chaire, *or the* Romish Church *under any capacity, if perchance they shall ever agree, as they have not yet, upon any, that they* joyntly *pronounce* Infallible, *would be questioned concerning the* Rightfulnesse *of the* Title, *he endeavours therefore to frame them a* Commission *out of several* Scriptures; *by which, as he doth acknowledge the* Soveraign Authority *of the* Scriptures, *so with what poor successe he endeavours to get countenance from them for his boldnesse, will easily appear, if one do but repeat the* Scriptures, *which he alledgeth, and joyn with them their* true *and* plain Interpretations: *which I do more willingly*

lingly endeavour, though I fear to be tedious, for two reaſons.

1. *Firſt, becauſe they are ſuch conſiderable quotations in the eſteem of his followers, that for want of better, (which they have ſought in vain) though they be ſufficiently impertinent, they are fain to make uſe of them ſtill.*

2. *Secondly, becauſe their* Interpretations, *which are our* Anſwers *to them, may enable ſome that are weak to defend themſelves againſt* diſputers, *who ſhall endeavour to diſcompoſe the quietneſſe of their true beliefe from acknowledged grounds of faith* miſinterpreted.

His firſt place is, He that heareth Luke 10.16.

heareth you, heareth me, &c. *May they therefore ſay what they will? theſe words were ſpoken to the Apoſtles, whom Chriſt commanded to preach, and told them what they ſhould ſay; and the Church now, ſpeaking as it ought, declares nothing but what* Chriſt *ſaid before, for* neceſſaries, *and whatſoever it doth according to his ſayings, is warranted by his authority, and ſo he that heareth them, heareth Chriſt. But what proof is here for ſaying any thing elſe beſides that which is written?*

Mat. 5. 14. *The ſecond is*; You are the light of the world, &c. *Yes, ſo they were; for Chriſt ſhined upon them, and they enlightened others, but it was by the reflexion of his beames, (i. e.) the*

Truths

Truths that he taught them, and their writings *are like* Lanthorns *of* trasparent glasse, *in which that divine light is preserved, and through which it shines. But those* Popish Traditions *are like* new thick horn, *through which we cannot discern the* old Apostolical Truth, *only it glimmers through those holes which are necessarily left open, because their odde stuffe was irreconcileably unfit to be close and handsomly joyned in one entire body with the verities of the written Word.*

The third is, You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judæa, *in* Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. *It's true, the* Apostles *were* Christs witnesses, *for they testified his Life and Do-*

ctrine, *and wrote them for memorials to ſuccceeding ages, but they would have been ſtrange* witneſſes *of his* doctrine, *if they ſhould have told other tales of their own invention, and ridiculous* aſſertours *of his* Inſtitutions, *if they ſhould have changed them at their pleaſure; as for Example, If after he had given the* bread *and* wine *to his Diſciples in his laſt Supper, they ſhould upon the firſt repetition of that* Sacrament *have given only the* bread *to the Communicants, and ſo have contradicted Chriſts order, with pretence of Tradition.*

To prove that the Rock *in the* 16. *of* Matth. *is the Pope, whom he calls the ſupreme Vicar of this Miniſtery, he quotes with it a place of Scripture, that overthrows*

throws his interpretation. Other foundation can no man lay, then that which is laid; which is Jeſus Chriſt. *Which place, as it tells us plainly, who was meant by the* Rock, *ſo it is as ſtrong a witneſſe againſt his aſſertion as any thing that I have the ability to imagine, yet as if it were not full enough, he addes confirmation unto it, though contrary to his intention, by citing with it that famous teſtimony of* Epheſ. 2. *where Chriſt is called the* great corner ſtone, *and* the foundation of the Prophets and Apoſtles. (i. e.) *the foundation upon which they were* built *themſelves, and* preached *as ſuch to others.* 1 Cor. 3, 11.

In the cloſe of that paragraph to prove a little better, that the

Church *hath power to teach that which the* Scripture *doth not, he quotes two places,* I will ſend you the Spirit of Truth, which ſhall lead you into all Truth; *and,* I am with you unto the end of the world. *And after this, triumphs as if nothing could be deſired further.*

John 16. 13.

Mat. 28 20.

But for all that, what this ſhould be to his purpoſe, I am not able to gheſſe. For what can be inferred from theſe places, but to the benefit of our aſſertion? for if Chriſt promiſed the ſpirit to lead them into all Truth, did he not teach them it perfectly? and if he promiſed to be with them unto the end, did he fail to aſſiſt them in their work; which was to publiſh the Truth by writing as well

as

as preaching? as we learn from S. John, These things are written that ye might believe, &c. *where he addes also, that this was done so perfectly, that whosoever should read and believe through their writing, might have eternall life. And as it appears from the* 20. *v. of the* 28. *of* Math. *read all together, all the assistance that the Church for future times could expect from this promise, is only while she does teach others to observe what Christ commanded, unlesse we will break that sacred* connexion, *which all true Christians know to be between the* precepts *and* promises *of God. But to what precepts, except those which we find upon divine* Record *the promises should be annexed,*

Chapt. 20 *v.* 31

nexed, we underſtand not, nor why they ſhould not invent new promiſes, *as well as pretend to other* precepts. *Neither do we trouble ourſelves at all with thoſe big words, which, to amuſe ignorant people, they ſpeak concerning the* imperfection *of the* Scriptures, *to be ſupplied by the dictates of a pretended infallible Church, ſince we could never yet hear of any one* Truth *neceſſary to ſalvation, but we found it in* Scripture, *nor had any certain news of one* Tradition *that is* univerſal, *and of* Primitive derivation, *and ſo of good uſe in the Church of God, but we receive it willingly.*

I have judged this Diſcourſe *the more* ſeaſonable, *becauſe the adverſaries of our Church make account*

account that we are in such a strong tendency to the Romish belief, which contradicts what is here asserted, that one of their late Proselytes, with high approbation of his Fellows, doth not fear to publish to the world their swelling hopes, That the fields are even white unto the harvest; *and thereupon with other of his companions* doth thrust in his sickle, *which he sharpens with such assertions as these; viz.* That the Scriptures contain only such necessaries, as may serve in some desperate cases, that they were pen'd only for some particular persons or congregations, that it is impossible but that the text of the Scripture is corrupted, That the Protestants do but guiltily defend the universal sufficiency of the Scriptures, &c. *I know not why he delights*

Cressy *his Exomologesis. Cap.* 21.

Cap. 10. Rushworth *dial.* 2 *sect.* 4.

lights so much in that word, guilty, *for he useth it more then once, in the forementioned application; unless he was an* Hypocrite *when he was of our* Religion, *but I am sure he doth it not without grosse impudence. For he knew well enough with what hearty courage, such arguments of Truth as he thought unanswerable, and all other testimonies of a good conscience, the learned* Protestants *have discharged themselves in that point.*

Having disparaged the Scriptures, He *and* Rushworth *in his* Dialogues *reprinted with* Whites *enlargements, endeavour to lodge amongst us again, as if they had never been rejected before with deserved scorn, a* sorry company of their beggerly Innovations, *great strangers to the* Word *of* God, *and the*

the Primitive Church, *as* Tranſubſtantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Chriſt, Invocation of Saints, Veneration of Images, Prayers for the dead,& Purgatory, Indulgences and publick ſervices in Latin, nay,the generality of Romiſh Ceremonies, & that we muſt believe theſe to be neceſſary forſooth,and that they were ever uſed in the Church of Chriſt. *Exomolog. Sect.3 Cap.2* *Ruſh. dial. 1.ſect. 8, 9, 10,11.*

Now this is but to revive *the* old trick,*by which they ſtill endevoured our revolt to their Religion*, viz. *by making us* disbelieve the perfection of the Scripture,&that we muſt for a ſupply receive their Traditions, as that *unworthy* Faction *of* Trent *ſayes*,Pari pietatis affectu & reverentia, with the ſame holy regard which we give to the Scriptures, *Seſſio. 4. Decret. 1.*

concluding

concluding absurdly, that because some silly people, and others disaffected to our profession, by the trouble of worldly temptations, that have happened of late among us, are unwarily inclined towards them upon shallow or perverse grounds, therefore few or none of us understand the Truth of our own Principles, or the impertinency & danger of their bold additions; or, as if because they had no mind to remember, it being to their grief, that therefore we have forgot that Bishop Jewel *did long since shew them, that for sixe hundred years after Christ, the Church taught not many of those things, which Rome did in his time; and as if* Doctor Featly *had not put the* Jesuits *to a loss, to prove, that for the first five hundred years, there was any City or Parish, in which there was*

was any visible Assembly that taught the Articles *of the* Councel *of* Trent. *As if we did not know by their writings, that the* Fathers *acknowledged the* Perfection *of the* Scriptures, *that we we were at last by some* strange Accident *grown so foolish, as to take their* corrupt present party *for the* Catholick Church, *or that they could make us tamely believe that we differ from* the ancient primitive institution, *if we reject their* Innovations, *or as if we did not understand their* horrid uncharitableness, *which denies salvation to those multitudes of Christian Churches and Nations in the world, that receive not their new doctrines, and also as absolutely necessary, though they have no* testimony *of* antiquity, *and are contrary to* Scripture,

and

and therefore for our ſelves, were as much afraid of their Excommunications *and* ſentences of damnation, *as we ſhould be in* danger *of* burning *or* hanging, *if they had the ſame power over us now, which they* cruelly *executed in* Queen Maries *dayes. But I will inſiſt no further upon this diſcourſe.*

Some attempt the diſgrace *of the* Scriptures *another way, making the pretence of the* ſpirit *an argument of the imperfection of holy Writ: and of ſuch I think it is no offence to affirm, that they do not conſider what they ſay. What good man ever denied the neceſſity of the help and guidance of the divine Spirit? We ſtand not in ſo much need of* fire *and* water *as of Gods* Grace *and* Spirit; *but what wiſe man ever made this an argument of the Scriptures*

ptures imperfection? but such a proof as this serves the inconsiderate, God helps us to understand the Scriptures, & therfore they are an imperfect Revelation of his wil.

And if the Spirit *be pretended further then so*, i.e. *to teach us other necessaries to salvation, besides the Gospel of Christ. I answer, that this is such a* spirit, *as was not promised to the* Primitive Church, *no, nor the* Apostles, *for the* spirit *was* to lead them into all Truth, *but by* bringing to their remembrance what Christ tanght *them, and that was enough. As Christ had* received a commandment from the Father what he should say. Joh. 12. 49. *so* he gave *the* words to them, *which he had* received. Joh. 17. 8. all *of them*. Joh. 15. 15. all things that I heard of my Father, I have made known

Joh. 14. 26.

known to you. *So that those which pretend the assistance of the* spirit *for divine teaching, & neglect these incomparable directions, do not well know what those words,* The assistance of the spirit, *do signify, and so slight that, which they pretend to desire. For the* Scriptures *given by* inspiration *of the* Holy Ghost, *and written by his* instinct *for our instruction, are a great part of his assistance, & are therefore most truly called by the* Italian Poet.

Dantes. ——*La larga ploia*
Dello spirito sancto, ch'e diffusa
In su le vecchie' en su le nuove coia.
i.e. a great shower of the holy spirit powred down through both the Testaments, *for the refreshment of Gods Church.*

These few things design'd to do honour to the H. Scriptures, *I humbly*

bly devote unto you. That approbation which you have bestowed upon them already, shall be to me a sufficient defence against any petty froward dislike. I hope they will be more acceptable to good men, and that, the businesse to which they are destin'd, will be more effectually promoted by your recommendation. I have only further to pray that God would continue your prosperity, and this I do not referring only to your particular capacity, though that wel deserveth my best wishes, but also to your publick; looking upon you, if I may use the Emperours *words,* ὅσων ἐπὶ σοὶ λείπεται τῷ κοινῷ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένει τυχεῖν Your private welfare is a great publick good. *May those which wish you ill, repent; and instead of doing you* harm, *may they receive that* benefit, *which you are never unwilling*

unwilling to administer, as any opportunity presents it self to you. Julian *and some others used to despise the* Galileans *(so they termed the Christians) for fooles, and to make them more such, they interdicted their children the use of Schools, intending by this means to deprive them of that wisdom & divine accomplishment which ariseth from true learning. It were a shameful thing if* Christians *should grow so silly now, as to* chuse *that for a* priviledge, *which he* forced *upon them, and they* resented *as a* grievous affliction. *God of his Grace preserve* both the Universities, *till* education *be no* necessity, *and the* want *of* learning *no* imperfection; *which is and shall be the daily prayer of*

Eton Coll. *Aug.* 16. 1658.

Your most affectionate and faithful servant,

NATHANAEL INGELO

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LUKE 16. 29.

Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.

PArables are vocall Hieroglyphicks, lively images of usefull Truths, fitted for instruction. Like Pictures; πλάττονται πρὸς τὸ ἀληθὲς, they are drawne in the proportions of some real thing; and they do, as the Epistle to the Hebrewes saith of *Moses* his shadows ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν ἐπι- Cap. 8. 5.

ἐανίων, by way of type and resemblance they do minister to the knowledge of heavenly matters; a way of teaching very much used by the great Bishop of our souls; who did, by this kind of discourse, appositely set forth divine things, making fescues of known earthly resemblances to point to spiritual and heavenly doctrines, *If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how will you believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?* Many of these were so plain, that they had no veyle, but their plainnesse; by reason of which many, that pretended to be great enquirers into profound mysteries, could not perceive any wisdome in them, that

Joh. 3. 12.

that is, they could not ſee wood for trees, nor diſcerne truth, unleſſe it were hid a little more under Philoſophical ſhadowes: as if Chriſt came not to ſave ſinners, but to teach Philoſophy to thoſe, who had more already then they made uſe of, to the right end.

It is true; ſome of them were more obſcure; and good reaſon; both to hide the truth from ſuch who had more then once ſhut their eyes againſt it: (and why ſhould not God puniſh malitious winking with juſt darkneſſe?) and to make good men inquiſitive; and to them they were never uſeleſſe, both becauſe Chriſt was pleaſed, for the moſt part, to adde the interpretation, and the lo-

vers of truth were alwayes more incited to enquire: that ſo they might ſee the *picture*, which hung behind the *curtaine*.

Ἄργοι γὰρ εἰσὶ τῶν ἐρώντων οἱ πόθοι
Εἰ συντόμως τυγχάνοι τῶν πόθουμένων.

It ſlugs the affections of lovers, if their deſire may be obtained with a ſlight endeavour: as the learned *Deacon* ſaid of old; who, ſpeaking of the rich ſenſe treaſured up in the Scriptures, requiring the ſearch of moſt careful meditation, breaks forth into theſe expreſſions.

Ὦ πλοῦτος Ἀβύσσου ἐννοημάτων,
Βοᾷ πᾶσι τοῖς θέλουσιν ἀρύεσθαι λόγους
Ὅσους λαβεῖν χωροῦσιν, οὐχ ὅσους ἔχει.

O Abyſſe of rich notions, inviting all that are willing to draw as much truth as their veſſels

veſſels will hold, though not as much as thy ſea contains. Were the ſecrets of *Philoſophy* hid in Figures, or lockt up in ſuch Labyrinths of Diſcourſe, that none could come at them without a clue; that one might ſay of them as *Ariſtotle* of his books, περὶ τῆς φυσικῆς ἀκροάσεως, they were, and they were not divulged. Nay, muſt the *myſtical rites of ſuperſtitions and idolatrous worſhips*, have their maskes, leſt they ſhould be proſtituted to vulgar contempt by naked repreſentations? which there was great reaſon to fear, if they had not hid their baſeneſſe with thick curtains; Now, though Chriſts doctrines need no veyle for ſuch reſpects, for they bluſh

not before the Sunne; yet, why only ſhould the pearles of incomparable price be expoſed to unworthy ſwine? No, Chriſt juſtly hid the *myſteries* of his kingdome from the malitious, and wiſely put the plain-hearted upon the ſtudy of their own concernments; for, though he hath laid plain before them, whatſoever is neceſſary, yet, by ſeeking, they find more of that, which is next to neceſſary, (i.e.) very profitable, and ſo perfect their underſtandings with abundance of *Truth*, and more firmly eſtabliſh their *Faith*, by the conſideration of it; and either of theſe payments, is a ſufficienr price of their labour: ſo much of *Parables* in general.

Now,

Now, though this *paragraph* (beginning verſe the 19. to the end of the Chapter) be not expreſſely called a *Parable*, as many others, which are unqueſtionably ſuch, are alſo ſet down without the name; yet, I cannot underſtand it otherwiſe. For, what tongue could *Dives* have, whoſe body was in the Grave? Or, what fingers ſhould *Lazarus* dip in water, who was unbodied? Do flames of material fire burn ſouls, or ſinge our thoughts as they paſſe through them? The great Gulf denotes a hinderance of converſe between bleſſed and damned ſpirits. What comfort can the juſt, made perfect, give to thoſe, who are, not only *condemned*,

but *executed*? To upbraid the miſerable is a thing unſpeakably below the temper of the bleſſed, who are ſo becauſe they were forgiven; and now their tranquillity is freed from the groanes and cries of the damned, as a moſt unacceptable diſturbance. It is unlikely that thoſe which are in Hell make prayers to the Saints in Heaven; ſo that, what is ſet down as ſpoken, ſignifies only what was fit to be ſaid, if any words were to be made of ſuch matters. Our expectation therefore from this Scripture muſt lie upon that, which is indeed the main of all *Parables*, The ſcope to which it was directed: and here Chriſt teacheth two things.

1. That

1. That a poor man whoſe ſoule is rich in goodneſſe, though he be diſtreſſed in this world, ſhall one day be carried into the Regions of Repoſe and Bliſſe: and the luxurious unmerciful rich ſhall ſuffer ineffable torments.

2. That obſervance of the directions of the holy Scriptures, is the right way to eſcape thoſe torments, and to be made partakers of reſt in *Abrahams* boſome; that is, true happineſſe.

My deſigne is upon the latter, which lies faire in the verſes read. For, our Saviour, repreſenting mans fooliſh after-wit by *Dives* his requeſt, that *Lazarus* might riſe from the dead; and, with relations of ſtrange things

things in the other world fright his brethren from their sins, doth also shew the true way to the living in *Abrahams* answer, *They have Moses and the Prophets*, the sufficient guidance of the Scriptures; and if they will not follow that, there is no reason *one should be sent from the dead*, to preach to them, *neither if one did come, would they heed him.*

Now, lest any should stumble at the threshold of my discourse, before I go any further, I will remove a scruple or two, which may possibly lie in the way. One is, Why do you *Object.* 1. say, the guidance of the holy Scriptures? so the New Testament is included, whereas it is said here, onely *Moses* and the Prophets,

Prophets, that is, the Old Teſtament,

I ſay the New Teſtament alſo becauſe *Moſes* and the Prophets direct ſo, and that is a good warrant: to obſerve the direction of the New Teſtament, is a great piece of the guidance of the Old. As for *Moſes*, he wrote ſo much of Chriſt, that, when he himſelf diſputed with the Jewes, he thence convinced them of malicious unbeliefe. *Had you believed Moſes ſayings, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me.* What did he write? you may read in his book called *Deuteronomy* theſe words, *God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet like unto me, of thy brethren, according to thy deſire, and I will*

Anſw.

Joh. 5. 46.

Chapt. 18. 15.

will put my words into his mouth, and whosoever will not hearken unto the words which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him. The single-hearted Jews, aware of the divine truth of this Prophesy, were guided, as the *Magi*, by a starre, to Christ. So *Philip* and *Nathanael*, true Israelites, embraced him, saying with joy, *We have found him of whom* Moses *wrote in the Law.* Whom when the degenerate Jewes rejected, the wise Apostles reproved them from the same *Moses*, quoting the forecited words; as we see, *Acts* 3. 22. therefore well might our Saviour say, *Had you believed* Moses? that is, Had you been, as you pretend, true children

Joh. 1. 45.

dren of *Abraham*, and genuine diſciples of *Moſes*, you would not have diſowned me, whom *Moſes* acknowledged for his Maſter, and eſteemed ſo worthy of honour, that he *counted the ſufferings of Chriſt greater riches then the treaſures of Egypt*. For, as *Abraham ſaw my day afar off, and rejoyced*, ſo, *Moſes* knew the liquid *Rock*, *which followed them* in the Deſert *was*, (i. e.) did ſignifie, *Chriſt*.

The *Prophets* alſo told the ſame tale, and *Malachi* that brought up the rear, and claſpt the Old Teſtament, bad the Jewes expect *the Sunne of Righteouſneſſe*, which was to riſe and ſpread his wholeſome rayes like wings of ſalvation Mal. 4.

over

over the world. This was written in the close of that Oeconomy: since therefore *Moses* and the Prophets told us *the desire of all Nations*, whom they had long waited for, was coming; and bad the people to prepare his way, by fitting their wicked hearts for so great a comfort, whosoever doth not receive Christs Gospel, doth not hear *Moses* and the Prophets: Neither do they consider the great reasons which they afford to convince us of this matter. For they taught that Christ was to be *the light of the Gentiles*, *and the Glory of Israel*, and this in a sence so raised, that the former glory stood valuable by it in no degree of comparison.

He

He was to fulfill the Prophesies, which had been but glorious vanities, if he had not made them good. He was to chase away shadowes, and what is the Day to night? To heighten their motives with *better promises*, and take off the false Comments, which had crept upon the Law by the iniquity of the times, *viz.* the carelesnesse of the people, and the wickednesse of the Pharisees; so that the New Testament must not be left out.

But then one may say (and some have been as fooliſh as to say it;) We do not care for *Moses and the Prophets*, we have no need of the Old Testament. *Object. 2.*

This is to run upon the o- *Answ.*

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ther poſt of the doore. He that is no better adviſed, is juſt like a man who, having a great cauſe depending, s reſolved, let it go right or wrong, he will uſe but one witneſſe; he can have more, but he cares not for them. We do not uſe to burn the Records of our Anceſtors, nor to cut in pieces the evidences of our lands, nor the Counter-parts of deeds. He which values the poſſeſſion of truth, will not eaſily part with one of its beſt witneſſes. The Scripture ſaith as much as one can well deſire in this point. *Moſes and Elias* appeared in the transfiguration of Chriſt, and were *witneſſes of his glory*; The Goſpel is his ſpirituall tansfiguration; and unto that Glory they

they bear a full and well agreeing witneſſe. This ſpirit might murmur thus, Why could not one Cherubin have ſerved to cover the Mercy-ſeat? God put two, whoſe faces were towards each other, and their wings did meet. So do both the Teſtaments ſpread their golden wings over our *Throne of Grace*, Chriſt Jeſus.

What is thus ſaid of the Old Teſtament, we eaſily learn of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, who acknowledged the uſefulneſſe of its divine Truth, whileſt they proved their aſſertions by it; nay, they declared nothing but what the Prophets foretold, and longed to have ſeen; by which it appears, that God hath ſo put them

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together, that it is devilliſh to attempt a divorce. The Apoſtle *Paul* did not only adviſe *Timothy* to *read* them, but told him that they *were able to make him wiſe to ſalvation*; (i.e.) were full of divine inſtructions, and as fit for the Jews to walk by towards heaven, as the morning light is for a traveller to begin his journey, and as to himſelf, he profeſſed that he had *great conſolation and hope through the knowledge of* the rare inſtances of the Old Teſtament, in which he ſaw his hopes verified. Who would deſtroy ſuch famous memorials of Truth? and, writing to the *Epheſians* concerning the Church under the New Teſtament, which is an *habitation*

2 Tim. 3. 15.

Rom. 15. 4.

of

of God through the the Spirit, he sayes it is *built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Christ being the great Corner-stone.* When wise men pull stones out of the foundations of their houses, then good Christians may reject the writings of *Moses*, and *the Prophets.* So having reconciled two that were never at odds (only some weak or ill-minded people seek occasion to put difference amongst near friends;) and having proved that neither are to be refused as *superfluous*, it remains to shew, (for some doubt it) that both are *enough*, and of that we have this fourfold Assurance. Eph. 2. 20.

1. As they are Perfect Counsels of excellent wisdom,

concering the way to happineſſe.

2. As they are ſtrict injunctions of Divine Authority concerning our Duties.

3. As they contain the ſtrongeſt Proofes of our Obligation to theſe Duties, and ſuch as are no where elſe, and ſo are the beſt perſwaſions to our Wills.

4. As they are a Propoſal of all theſe Truths to our underſtandings, in a way of moſt fair and full credibility.

1. *Arg.* *They are perfect Counſels of excellent wiſdome concerning the way to Happineſſe.* They are a full advice, and a moſt exact Method of attaining Bliſſe, preſcribed by him who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life,*

Life, or the *true way to Life*. What lay ſcatter'd in many places, and muſt have been gathered with much care, and many collections, difficult to our ſhort apprehenſions, often tired, and ſo miſſing, it may be, what was not much further then we had gone, is here comprized to our hands in a perfect ſummary. Truths, otherwiſe ~~where~~ hid under much Rubbiſh, and mixed with many miſtakes, are here pure and clear in the ſpring, not mudded with careleſſe or beaſtly feet. What is obſcured in others by naturall weakneſſe or affected ſtile, is here plain enough through the ſuperintendency of the Divine ſpirit. So that good men may here expect whatſo-

ever is true, wise, necessary or useful. There is no plant of Righteousnesse, no wholesome herb in the world, but it was carried out of Christs garden (who planted them in Paradise?) and therefore he might well put them in his Gospel, they were his own, and when they were scatter'd, he gathered them together again: as God shewed his regard to the *Decalogue* by writing it the second time, after *Moses* had rashly broken the first *Tables*.

After God had spoken *by several parcels*, and *after divers manners by the Prophets*, at last he sent his *Son* to perfect the book, write it full, and seal it up: and this is so well done, that whosoever shall adde

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any thing, instead of mending the work, and doing the world a curtesie, he shall but bring a curse upon himself: for Christ hath made it Μέτρον ἀδιάψευστον τῶσαν πρόσθησιν καὶ ἀφαίρεσιν μηδαμῶς ἐπιδεχόμενον, (i. e.) a perfect Canon.

Now that appears thus. God hath declared Christ to be our *Prophet*, commanded us to *hear him*, told him *all his mind* concerning us, laid up in him *all the treasures of divine wisdom*. He told his Disciples, *all that he heard of his Father*, bad them *go and preach it*, and promised salvation to all that should *believe it*. *Paul* professed that he had declared the *whole councell of God* in his preaching, and pronounced a curse upon any Angel,

Mat. 17. 5. Joh. 12. 49. Colos. 1. 19. Joh. 15. 15. Mat. 28. 20. Mar. 16. 15, 16. Acts 20. 27. Gal. 1. 8.

that ſhould bring *another Goſpel.* The Evangeliſt *Luke* wrote all *that Chriſt taught till* his *Aſcenſion*, and Saint *John* added as much concerning the miracles of Chriſt, as was *enough* for motive to faith.

Acts. 1. 1, 2. Joh. 20. 31.

From all which we argue, Chriſt was in the boſome of the Father, and knew all; he came from thence and told all, his Scholars at his command preached, and, for the benefit of future times, wrote all. We acknowledge they did, received their books, and are ſatisfied; only the Papiſts and ſome other Hereticks, that they might have the honour and profit to make the ſupply, ſay they did not; but who will believe them? when Chriſt ſayes,

ſayes, Go and preach *what I have taught you*, and promiſeth ſalvation to thoſe which believe that and no more. They will make pretty work, that after this appoint other neceſſaries to be believed, (i.e.) ſuch neceſſaries to ſalvation, as one may be ſaved and not believe them.

Now whereas 'tis objected, That Chriſt, no doubt, taught his Diſciples all things neceſſary, and it may be they wrote them, but they are loſt; however they were truſted with the Church, and that is to ſupply the defects of Scripture with unwritten traditions. *Object.*

Thoſe which ſay this would deſerve leſſe blame for their boldneſſe, if either they truly honou- *Anſw.*

honoured the Church, as they pretend, or we read not the Scriptures; or if, reading the Scriptures, they told us their own imperfection, and gave notice of a Church intrusted with a powor to supply their defect. But they honour the Church just as *Haman* did *Mordecai*; he would never have said so much should have been done to him whom the King would honour, but that he thought himself to be the man.

And if we did not read the Scriptures, their lie might be more easily swallowed. For they declare a perfection as to all necessaries, and so these men peradventure speak worse then they thought at first, for they

they make the Scriptures, not only *imperfect, but Lyars.*

But, as it ſhould have been difficult to ſay ſuch things, (for men ought to ſpeak the truth) ſo, it is harder to prove them, for the holy Scriptures, and the all-wiſe Providence are not ſo eaſily ſlanderd. Not the Providence of God: for, as he was careful to give us ſufficient means of ſalvation, and hath preſerved many things which are not neceſſary, but becauſe they were written, would he not preſerve what was neceſſary to be written and preſerved?

And, if he had meant to ſend us to the Church upon this Errand, he would certainly have told us where ſhe dwelt.

dwelt. It were as bad as no direction, to say there is a certain advice for you lockt up in a cheſt kept *in terra incognita*, (i.e.) *no body knowes where*. *Abraham* had given, if not miſadvice, yet but imperfect direction, when he ſaid, *Hear Moſes and the Prophets*, if this were the buſineſſe.

The Scripture ſayes enough to vindicate it ſelfe, and to give ſatisfaction to all conſidering men. That very place which they would ſuborn, to ſpeak againſt it ſelf, reſolves againſt them. *There are many more miracles which Jeſus did, but theſe are written, that you might believe.* If one queſtion what they were which are not written, that doubt muſt remaine

Joh. 20. 30, 31.

main, as to the particulars, for it ſayes nothing of them. But it can never be proved, that theſe which *Rome* would obtrude upon us are they, much leſſe that they are neceſſary; for the place aſſerts thoſe which are recorded to be enough. The ſpirit of truth doth often leave men to their wilful miſtakes; the Text ſpeaks of miracles, and they quote it for Doctrines.

But that the Scripture hath no defect in this point, a man may ſoon ſee; for, let any body compare the Proviſions which are in the Scripture with his own neceſſities, and if he be not ſupplied there, we may ſafely ſay, he hath ſome want, that is beyond the caſe of

of men that need nothing but salvation. As to salvation, we need instruction only in three points, and there we have it.

1. *As to God*; and for that the Ἐξήγησις τῆς φύσεως hath sufficiently declared to us his Nature and his Will, what he is, and what he would have us do, and what we may expect; How he will be worshipped; How we may partake of his love, continue in it, and be happy in him.

2. *As we relate to others*, he hath taught us how to behave our selves to them in his most perfect Rules, *Love thy neighbour as thy self*, *Do what thou wouldst have done to thee, and what thou wouldst not have done to thee, do not to another.*

These

Theſe he hath explained in ſpecial precepts, ſo fill'd with all neceſſary inſtances of Duty, Juſtice, and Charity, that well may a wronged man complain of his Brothers injury, but not of Chriſt, becauſe he did not forbid him to do it. The murmuring poor may complain of their hard-hearted neighbour, but not of Chriſt for neglecting to command Charity. He hath bid us imitate the Father with Charity as large as the Sun-beams, to forgive, love, and help our enemies, and overcome all evill with good.

3. *As to the Government of our ſelves*, how diſcreet and prudent would that be; if we followed Chriſts directions? He,

He, if any, taught the γνῶθι σεαυτόν, the right estimations of soul and body, that we are, what we are, most upon the account of soul, whose nature and duration he hath declared and taught to provide for immortality. He hath also chalked out the proportions of worldly cares, the measures of our passions. Both the roots of Passion are secure, if we keep his rules for Desire and Anger. One may say to all other Physitians, not only, How imperfect are your cures in comparison of Christs, but how short your prescriptions? what soberness of mind? What Temperance, Meekness and Peace, are the products of his precepts? He which read

Christ

Christs words duly, is *perfectly instructed to every good work.* He that hath lodged these provisions in his soul, *may bring out of his treasures new and old, like a Scribe throughly instructed to the Kingdome of God.*

So that if the Grace which Christ hath brought to light in the Gospel hath taught us *Godlinesse, Righteousnesse, and Sobriety*, we may say with *Tertullian*; *Nobis curiositate opus non est post Christum Jesum, nec inquisitione post Evangelium. Hoc enim prius credimus, non esse quod ultra credere debemus.* The Scripture is so far from *defect* in this kind, that it is *redundant*; we have many things, very *profitable* added, besides

Lib. de præscrip. adversus Haret.

the *neceſſary*, and both theſe more then once, or in one book. See a ſtrange appetite! when men have more then they will do, though it be neceſſary, yet they would have more to do, though it be not neceſſary; nor it may be at all profitable. What folly is this? This is a deſign not to be keepers, but makers of Commandements, *præceptorum emendatores*, as *Hilary* calls them; not to do *Gods will*, but ſerve their *owne!* Our Saviours words do eaſily accomodate themſelves to ſuch people, *You teach for doctrines the Commands of men, and make the word of God of no effect by your Traditions.*

Arg. 2. But at what perill any can adde to Gods word; the ſe-

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cond Argument will ſhew, which is, *That the Scriptures are alſo ſtrict injunctions of Divine Authority concerning our duties.* The reaſon of our faith and obedience to the Scriptures, is reſolved into their *divine Authority*, which as it is the greateſt of all, ſo upon leſſe we may not depend. Of his Authority we may truly ſay that it is

ὁ νόμος πάντων βασιλεὺς θνητῶν. *Pind.*

God is infallible in his underſtanding, faithfull in his declarations, and ſo highly deſerves our Aſſent. He is Almighty and moſt true, and therefore we believe and hope in the promiſes of his word. As God, he hath a Right to com-

mand, and we as creatures are obliged to obey, and ſo we receive his commands. Gods authority onely could juſtly make us believe, obey, and fear, what is there declared, promiſed, commanded, and threatned.

There is a place of Scripture which the Papiſts do impertinently alledge for the obſcurity, (i. e.) the diſhonour of Gods word, which as it is nothing to their purpoſe, ſo it doth moſt excellently ſerve to prove what we have in hand.

2 Pet. 1. 20, 21. τῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες, ὅτι πᾶσα προφητεία γραφῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως ου γίνεται. *Knowing this firſt, that no propheſie of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.* The deſigne of the Apoſtle was the ſame

ſame with mine, to exhort Chriſtians to give heed to the Scriptures, as ſuch Oracles which would not deceive them. He affirmes the prophetick *word ſurer* then a private revelation, which he, *James* & *John* had in the Mount, and commends the diligent heed they gave to it, *till the day-ſtar ſhould ariſe*, peradventure till the truth of the propheſies of Chriſt ſhined forth in their accompliſhment. But the ſtreſſe of all this hope in the Scriptures, lies upon this, that none of them were ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως *of private impulſe*; meaning, as Saint *Paul* ſayes in other words, πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, *All Scripture is divinely inſpired.* And this appeares by the verſe

2 Tim. 3. 16.

Verſ. 21. that followes. *For the prophecie came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.* So that ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως ου γίνεται ſignifies they are not of mens private will, but from the divine ſpirit. The Prophets did not go on their own head, as we ſay, but on Gods errand. When God reproved thoſe that went without his bidding, he ſayes thus, Jer. 23. 21. οὐκ ἐνετειλάμην I ſent them not, and yet they ran: So that the ſence will be, thoſe holy men who deliver'd the Scriptures, upon which you relie, writ not what came into their minds as from themſelves, but they ſet down Gods will.

The other ſence of ἐπίλυσις, for

ſolution

ſolution or *explication*, in which ſome worthy perſons do take it, and in which ſenſe it is uſed in good authors (for ſo *Iamblicus* in the 21 Chapter of his Protrepticks, being about to expound *Pythagoras* his ſhort precepts, ſayes, Ἀποδώσομεν ἑκάστου συμβόλου τὴν ἐπιλύσιν, *I will give the expoſition of every precept:*) is ſo far from diſagreeing with the former, that it is a neceſſary conſequence from it, as the beſt ground: for if the Prophets deliver'd not their own will, but Gods mind, we muſt not reſolve them into our ſence, but take his. The Scriptures were given to expreſſe Gods meaning, not to have ours impreſſed upon them. So that take the word in any

poſſible ſence, this place is pitifully urged againſt the plainneſſe of the Scriptures, unleſſe we imagine that the Apoſtle ſhould urge good men to truſt the Scriptures, becauſe they could not tell what they meant; which as it is moſt abſurd to his purpoſe, ſo all that it does afford for argument to prove the obſcurity of the Scriptures is but this, *Becauſe a man will not let me put what ſence I pleaſe upon his words, therefore I cannot tell what he ſayes.*

But as we ſee what little reaſon there is for that triumph in which the Papiſts bring this particular Scripture to accuſe the whole of *obſcurity* (for it neither ſpeaks of

their *obſcurity* nor *plainneſſe*) ſo we ſee by it, how great reaſon we have to believe the Scriptures, ſince their authority is from God. It is a plain conſequence, ſince the holy penmen neither invented them by their wit, nor writ them of their own will, but delivered Gods ſence at his appointment, that we ought to give them all poſſible credit and obſervance.

But what ſhould I ſpeak of mens authority, or of believeing *Moſes*, the *Prophets* or *Apoſtles* upon their own account? *Moſes* was but a ſervant, and once ſo diſobedient, that for it he was kept out of *Canaan*, and if his deſign had been to have had credit for his own

own authority, he would never have leſſened it with that ſtory. The *Prophets* were ſubject to like paſſions with our ſelves, (i.e.) they were men. The Apoſtles were weak in themſelves, and ſo far from being the *New Wine* of the Goſpel, that till Chriſt had ſtrengthened them with new principles, they were like *old torn bottles*, they could not receive it. But this hinders not their acceptance, their authority is from God. He took the ſtammering *Moſes*, and made him a God, (i.e.) a divine teacher to the Church. *Moſes* was conſcious of his own inability, and loth to ſtirre, but at Gods command he took up his bundle of ceremonies, and carried an

Umbrella

Umbrella to the *Sun of Righteouſneſſe*. The *Prophets*, as was ſaid juſt now, ſpake not of private impulſe, but *God ſpake by the mouth of his holy Prophets ever ſince the world began*. The *Apoſtles* were commanded to ſtay till they *were cloathed with power from on high*, and when they had that divine accompliſhment, they preacht, and Chriſt whom they preacht, *was believed on in the world*: So that it is great reaſon we ſhould believe their writings, for they are the word of God.

If any ask, How does that appear? I anſwer, By three divine Seales annexed to them, and a peculiar ſignature or mark of divine authority, which

which I do not find in any other book.

1. *The ſpirit of Propheſie which foretold ſuch things as are beyond the skill of nature, and art to foreſee.*

2. *The power of miracles which performed ſuch things as are above the power of nature, and art to do.*

3. *The reſurrection of the great Preacher of the Goſpel, Chriſt Jeſus, after he had been dead and buried three dayes.*

1. *The ſpirit of Propheſie which foretold ſuch things as are beyond the skill of nature, and art to foreſee:* I call the firſt Seale. All the world hath acknowledged divinity in ſuch præſcience. The Latines made knowne their ſence of it to be

ſuch

ſuch in the name by which they called it, that is, *Divinatio*, and they and the Greeks both confirmed this opinion, by offering ſacrifice when they conſulted their Oracles concerning things to come. Men can foreſee what is viſible in the cauſes, and curious eyes will diſcern that which is hid from common ſight, but to foretell future contingents, as we call them, is a thing not to be done but by extraordinary communion with God. *Iſaiah* by this divine prerogative, put the heathen Idols to a nonplus, *Declare things to come, that we may know you are Gods.*

Nebuchadnezzars Magi would have been as much to ſeek for the

the true interpretation, if he had told them his prophetical dream, as they were for the dream it self when he had loſt it, which a pen-man of the holy Scripture found out and interpreted; and they confeſſed the Truth, that it was only by the *power of the immortall God.*

Of this teſtimony the Scripture hath abundance of inſtances, and though they be not ſo common in the New Teſtament, there is good reaſon for that, becauſe then was the time of accompliſhing predictions; and therefore it ſayes, *This is the acceptable time, behold the Lamb of God*, &c. To *foreſee* now was to overlook, yet this ſpirit appears alſo manifeſtly in

in the Goſpel, both in *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*. Who hath not read the twenty fourth of *Matthew*? where the whole progreſs of the Goſpel is foretold, to wit, that it ſhould be preacht to all nations by the Apoſtles, that they ſhould be queſtioned before Rulers and Judges about it, that Jeruſalem ſhould be deſtroyed for diſobedience to it; and ſince the propheſies which concerned *Chriſt* the *Meſſiah*, were concredited to the Jewes, *Chriſt* did let them ſee the juſtice of their deſtruction, becauſe *they knew not the day of their viſitation*, though all the marks of propheſie concerning it were viſible, Chriſt himſelfe often holding them before their eys,

A de-

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A de-

A deplorable ſign of a ruinous ſtate, a fatal blindneſſe.

Heſiod. Ὅς δέκε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοέῃ μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων,
Ἐν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὅδ' ἄντ' ἀχρήϊος ἀνήρ.

Miſerable wretches! how can they eſcape deſtruction? they neither ſee what is good for them, though it be laid before their eyes, nor give heed to thoſe who for a long time warned them of their danger.

That the Apoſtles of Chriſt had this ſpirit alſo, is manifeſt by their reſpective writings.

2. The ſecond ſeale is *the power of miracles, that is, ſuch things as are above the power of nature, and art to do.* Miracles are demonſtrations of the divine preſence in a way extraordinary. Nothing can produce

duce an effect above the power of its cauſality. Thoſe things which Chriſt performed tranſcend all ordinary power, *A privatione ad habitum non datur regreſſus naturalis.* But he raiſed the dead, *Lazarus* alſo was buried four days. As he ſpake as *never man ſpake*, ſo to make his works parallel with his words, he did as never man did, *It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael. Nicodemus* inferred right, he did ſuch things as no *man can do unleſſe God be with him*, meaning, above ordinary concourſe; and therefore added rationally, *We know thou art a Doctor ſent from God.* It was a double argument of the *Meſſiah*, which *Chriſt* ſent to *John* by his diſciples in

his Symbolical answer, *The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, &c.* (i.e.) such things as were not only *foretold*, but *miraculous*.

It is true, Mountebanks may play tricks, and cunning men put cheats upon easie people, so the *Thessalians*, knowing the time of Eclipses, made their ignorant neighbours believe, that they pull'd downe the Moon with their verses; but by which of their Devices, nay, by which of *Hippocrates* Aphorismes may one learn to cure *a lame man with ones shadow*, or *a fever with a handkerchief*?

What is further to be said in confirmation of this proof, I shall bring in by and by to dis-

dit

credit the mock-miracles of some heathen pretenders quoted in oppoſition to Chriſt; only here I may adde theſe two things concerning ſuch Devices.

1. That they are not onely a teſtimony of the worlds opinion concerning the *Divinity* of miracles, but alſo a tacit confeſſion that *Chriſt* did them; As counterfeit coin ſpeaks the uſe of true money. If there had not been ſuch a way of proof, why did they ape it?

2. That they were foretold by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, and ſo people were not only forewarned of a danger, but confirmed in the beliefe of the Truth, when they ſaw the predictions written concerning

Impostors exactly fulfilled. For as the *predictions* and *prefigurations* of *Christ* by the Prophets made way for his reception, when he came as the true *Messia*, so the *predictions* and *predescriptions* of *Antichrist*, written by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, gave argument against them, when they came accordingly to be *Impostors*.

3. The third Seale is the Resurrection of the great Doctor of divine Truths, after he had been dead and buried three dayes. And here behold the incomparable wisdome of divine Providence, which brings day out of darkneſſe, and turns the shadow of death into the morning, the death of Christ (a great piece of the myſtery

of

of Redemption, for *his blood was ſhed for the Remiſſion of our ſins*) put a doubt upon his doctrine, and ſtagger'd his Diſciples. But this cloud made only way for a more illuſtrious appearance of his Truth, for the Reſurrection took off all doubts ariſing from his death, and his Goſpel gained confirmation, as a Truth doth from a clear anſwer, to a ſtrong objection. Indeed it was to be feared, that the doctrines of Chriſt would have lien in the duſt, if he had not brought it forth with his own Reſurrection: and therefore Saint Paul doth well ſay, that *he was ſtrongly declared to be the Son of God, by the Reſurrection from the dead.* Rom. 1. 4.

Indeed his murderers perſwaded the ſouldiers with money, to affirm that his Diſciples ſtole him from the grave, but how came they to ſteale his ſoule into him, and to ſteale a power from his life to work miracles in his name? It is poſſible to make a lye, but impoſſible to hide it in ſo great a matter. Why did none of the Antichriſts riſe out of their graves, and confront thoſe which adhered to Chriſt, and after forty dayes converſe with worthy perſons by a glorious aſcenſion before competent witneſſes endeavour to get belief in the world? No, no, God will not be a witneſſe of falſhood.

Beſides theſe, there is alſo a pe-

a peculiar kind of ſignature or mark of divine authority upon theſe writings; one may think that Gods character, which men never uſurp't, (i.e.) *Dreadful threatnings* pronounced againſt ſuch as ſhould diſobey this Revelation. What Philoſopher ever uſed the mode of ſuch Authority? for the things menaced? what Tyrant ever mentioned them? or if he had, the Majeſty had been ridiculous. *Eternall puniſhments!* poor men! when they are ſo ill minded *they can kill the body, but that is all they can do*; God ſayes, *fear me who can caſt ſoule and body into Hell.* What man ever ſtamp't that Image upon his book?

Theſe are moſt becomming

the divine Majesty, for they are not onely *Authority*, but full of *wisdom* and *love*; for since feare was a tool meet for Gods work, he made fit matter for it, and in the use of these threatnings, the great Father of the world threatens his children, that so by a wise feare they may escape the feeling of his Rod.

Ὅπως ἀπλήγῳ σωφρονισθῶμεν φόβῳ.

And as the same Poet sayes excellently in another place,

Σπεύδει κολάζων· Διὸς γὰρ εἶναι τῆ φύσει
Καὶ τὸν ἀπειλὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ σωτήριον,
Ὃς πρὸς τὸ σώζειν μηχανᾶται ποικίλα.

He punisheth in love, and his threatnings are in their natural tendency wholesome, since God hath among many other things formed them for our preservation.

tion. *Threatnings* are *prudence* and *love* clothed with *Majesty.* Since men are not sufficiently frighted with being sinners, and think it not enough to see how ugly sin is in it selfe, God sets also before them its miserable Attendants, *Pale Death, Wan Fear, Grim Terrours,* and these *Eternall.* Who but God commanded his servants and threatned *them Hell,* if they obeyed not? *Fear ye not me who set bounds to the Sea, and when it swells, makes its own waves roule it in again, as a stubborn slave is pull'd back by his own haire? Feareſt thou not me, in whose hand is thy life, thy breath and all thy wayes? who will come in flaming fire, and render vengeance*

to

to all that wilfully know me not, and disobey my Gospel? So much for the consideration of the divine authority of the Scripture.

Arg. 3. The *Scriptures contain the strongest proofs of our obligation to our duties, and such as are no where else, and so are the best perswasives to our wills.* I shall number only four, and those briefly.

1. The *Incarnation of the Son of God*, the word was made flesh; A wonderful grace to our nature, and denied to Angels. That we might not doubt but we may go up to God, behold, he cometh down to us his Tabernacle is pitched in flesh, I, now he is *Emmanuel*. God comes into our Nature to call

call us home to himself. What will make us like unto God, if he do not, when he is made so like unto us? Who can unfold the mercies lapp't up in this Mystery? In this good Angels find wonder and joy, Devills horror and envy, but all good men the greatest occasion of love and obedience imaginable; especially if it be joyned with the second consideration.

2. And that is *the wonderfull death of the Son of God*, so made man. He *offered up himself by the Eternal Spirit*, and shed his blood for the pardon of our sins. He took our Bond and nailed it to his Crosse, and there cancell'd it with his blood. Look up sinner, and behold

behold the guilt of thy Treſpaſſes falling off, like the waxe of a broken Seale. That we the enemies of God, might learn the goodneſſe of Reconciliation, God doth act it firſt, who was not engaged to it, but by the goodneſſe of his own Nature. The Father loves, the Son dies; we are loved and pardoned, that we might ſee how baſe a thing it is to ſin, be impenitent, and hate. He ſlew the enmity upon the Croſſe, in his own death he killed our hate, or in himſelf, I, in himſelf, where elſe ſhould he break the flint, but upon the Cuſhion, our hard hearts, upon his own moſt ſoft and loving boſome?

3. We have here *the moſt excellent*

excellent example of Christ, which doth ſecure our direction, and perfect our encouragements. Men think themſelves in a good ſafe road, where they have ever and anon a Mercurial Statue pointing to their way; but what perfection would be added to their guidance, if it went along with them? Chriſt doth not onely ſhew us, where we ſhould go, as in a Map, but goes before us as a ſure guide, and a comfortable companion. *Si quis unquam fuerit, ille comes in via pro vehiculo eſt.* I, may we ſay, now we know what we ſhould be, and do in theſe bodies, for the word made fleſh hath ſhewn us. This is great encouragement to all

that

that are of the *right brood of Travellers*; for in the worſe way Chriſt goes before, breaks the Ice, and when we go up hill, lends us his hand. But why do I point any longer unto this Sun, which from the Scriptures ſhines ſo comfortably upon all good men?

4. He *hath engaged our obedience with moſt incomparable promiſes*, ſuch as he onely could make, ſuch as he onely could performe. What the Phariſees ſaid of one ſort, we may ſay of the reſt, *Who can forgive ſins but God?* It is impoſſible to ſerve God for nothing. For he paves all his ſervants before hand, but he is not ſo content, for he will adde ſuch wages, as none can

give

give their ſervants; Not *Earth*, or *Time*, or *poor matters* in the power of *Kings*, but things worthy of God, *Eternal Life, and Bliſſe*. If theſe were as truly believed, as they are plainly revealed, we ſhould find our ſelves ſufficiently obliged to obedience, and it concerns all that deſire to be ſaved to look to it: but becauſe they are ſo plainly revealed, I ſhall ſpeak no further of them.

Arg. 4. Now if any ſay that theſe things are enough, if they can be proved to be true, I haſten to the fourth particular head, (i.e.) *That the Scriptures are a propoſal of all theſe Truths to our underſtandings in a way of moſt fair and full credibility*, & that appears in theſe three things.

1. *The*

1. *The way of propoſal is moſt credible.*

2. *The things propounded, are in themſelves evidently true.*

3. *The expreſſions in which they are laid down, are plain, and fairly intelligible.*

No man can ſay, but when things are propounded ſo, he is fairly dealt withall.

1. Firſt, *The way of propoſall is moſt credible*, That whatſoever God ſayes is true, is the ground upon which this aſſertion ſets its foot, and that is ſuch a great Truth, that it is above the neceſſity of proof. He which believes there is a God, believes his Veracity; and he which believes not that there is a God hath no reaſon

to

to believe any thing. He hath no reaſon to believe any thing, if there be not Truth. And if there be not a God, there is nothing, and ſo no truth.

But as that foundation is firm and unqueſtionable, What God ſaith is true, I muſt build two things upon it, and on them the credibility of the firſt particular is founded. *viz.*

1. That *ſince, what God ſayes is true, we ought to receive whatſoever, we have abundant reaſon to believe that God did ſay it.*

2. *Whatſoever comes to us as Gods word, we ought by no meanes to reject it, without moſt weighty reaſons to make us think that God did not ſay it.*

1. As to the first, *Scripture is the way of proposal*, (i. e.) God hath written his mind to us; now we have two great reasons to make us believe this writing to be his word.

1. *Because writing was the fittest way to communicate his will to us.*

2. *Because since all writings need witnesse, that we might not doubt this to be his, he hath sent it attested by the witnesse of all those that were worthy to be believed*, (i. e.) *the good men of all ages.*

1. Because *writing was the fittest way to communicate the Gospel or his will to us*, that appears thus; All the Nations and ages of the world, could not be present at the birth of Christ,

Christ, nor be eye-witnesses of his miracles, see him rise out of grave, and ascend into heaven, put their fingers into his side, &c. what then? will they not believe unlesse they do? shall Christ be crucified afresh in every age, that we may see him rise from the dead? but because Christ was not to remain alwayes below, nor come again in that manner, and it concerned the world to know the Gospel, God committed it to writing, and hath made the holy Scriptures the safe Repositories of his Truth, that is, excellent preservatives against weaknesse of memory, and the rust of malicious designes, *Monumentum Christi est divina Scriptura, in qua divinitatis* *Orig. in diverſ. Hom. 2.*

& humanitatis ejus myſteria denſitate literæ veluti quadam muniuntur Petra.

How much God was in love with this way appeared of old, for though he was pleaſed to converſe familiarly with his plain friends the *Patriarchs*, yet leſt his counſels ſhould ſlip out of the fraile minds of men, he commanded *Moſes* to write them. *Litera ſcripta manet.* The Jewes nice care of the letters was well made uſe of by God; for it became *Septum Legis*, whileſt *they* looked to the *words*, *God* ſecured the *ſence*: and how unſure all other wayes are, we may perceive in that the Church hath not preſerved the remembrance of Chriſts miracles which

which were unwritten. Language is the Garbe of Truth, it comes not abroad till it be cloathed in words; and since Christ was not to stay here to preach alwayes, he enabled those whom he deputed to declare his will in several languages, that it might be understood by divers Nations, when it was spoken and heard, and because the Apostles were to die too, he commanded them to write it, and hath enabled his Chnrch to translate it into the several languages of the world, and so they understand it being written and read.

And herein God shewed his care of the *Unlearned*, who are the greater part of the world; for though they can-

not read the *Originall*; yet having a *Tranſlation*, which, in that it is a *Tranſlation*, agrees with the Original, they receive the ſame mind of God that the *Learned* do. Why ſhould any man be unſatisfied with this way of delivery, whereas *Princes and States*, in matters which they eſteem the greateſt, receive the *Propoſals* of *Ambaſſodours* by an *Interpreter*? If to *read*, or *hear theſe read*, be not ſufficient to direct us, what ſhall become of the *blind*, who can neither read *Original* nor *Tranſlation*? And if any think that they ſay a great matter againſt *Tranſlations*, when they affirm, *That we know not the ſignification of Hebrew and Greek words, but by the report of*

of men. They may as well ſay ſo of our Mother-tongue; for we know not that this word *Book* ſignifies, that which men commonly underſtand when they heare that word pronounced, but that we are told ſo; ſhall an *Engliſh-man* for this fine reaſon doubt, whether he can ſpeak true Engliſh or no? or ſhall any *child* neglect his *Duty* to his *Parents*, whom he can know but by *Report*? Behold how many ways can the divine Providence uſe one thing? The firſt diviſion of Tongues broke a fooliſh attempt of ſcaling the skies; This ſecond further'd a Noble Deſign of lifting us up the right way to Heaven. By the curteſie of ſo many *Tranſlati-*

ons, the Holy Ghoſt appeares again in *cloven Tongues*. Thoſe men which would make us believe the written word, is no fit Rule, becauſe every body skills not the Hebrew and Greek, do not only ſay that they are not a rule to us, but that they were not to the Jews or Grecians. For it is probable ſome Jewes, and more then probable, that many Greeks could no more read Greek or Hebrew, then many now can read Engliſh: and how did they do? If we may be deceived by thoſe which interpret, ſo might they by thoſe which read. But if they ſay, as they would fain have it, that the Jews had an infallible ſpirit, then it's lawful to ask where he lay aſleep, whilſt

whilſt the Jews, being wickedly miſled, rejected the Meſſiah?

2. As the Scripture was the beſt way, and therefore moſt likely to be made uſe of by the wiſe God, ſo that we might believe that he did, *We have the teſtimony of all that were worthy to be believed*, (i. e.) *good men in all ages*. The firſt age ſaw things, writ the truth, and ſo witneſſed to it. The next age received, believed and obeyed the truth, and expreſſed as great effects of the power of it, as the firſt, and ſo on. So that we may ſay as Saint *Paul* to *Timothy*, We will mind the Scriptures, knowing of whom we have received them. Thoſe who could not be willing to deceive themſelves (for they ventur'd

ventur'd this and the other world on't) and they which did so, what design could they have upon us?

2. The second assertion above-mentioned is, *that whatsoever comes to us as Gods word, we ought not to reject it without weighty reasons, to make us think he did not say it.* Against the Scriptures, we can imagine but two things objectable in this point.

1. *Invalidity in the evidence given for them.*

2. *Sufficient Counter-witwitnesse against them.*

1. As to the first, *what can invalidate the evidence? Insufficiency* can be imputed but upon two accounts, *either they know not the things they wrote,*

or

or they did not write the truth they knew; as ſome Hereticks ſaid in *Tertullians* time. *Solent dicere non omnia Apoſtolos ſciſſe, eadem agitati dementia, qua rurſus, convertunt, omnia quidem Apoſtolos ſciſſe, ſed non omnia omnibus tradidiſſe, in utroque Chriſtum reprehenſioni ſubjicientes, qui aut minus inſtructos aut parum ſimplices Apoſtolos miſerit. They uſe to ſay that the Apoſtles knew not all things, and being acted by the ſame madneſſe, they confeſſe that the Apoſtles might know all things, but that they did not deliver them, in both reproaching Chriſt, as one that ſent meſſengers, which either knew not their errand, or were not ſo honeſt as to deliver it.* What did

Libr. Contra Hæret.

did they not know? how could they but know? they were the Disciples of Christ, or such as conversed with them. *Quis integræ mentis credere potest eos aliquid ignorasse, quos Dominus individuos habuit in comitatu, in discipulatu, in victu?* &c. They were such as walkt with Christ, eat with him, or were scarce ever out of his company, or such as wrote from the mouthes of these and therefore they knew: and that they should not relate truly what they knew, what can make any wise man think? What, would they lose their present fortunes, and capacity to all worldly advantages, and expose themselves to all contempt and cruelty for what they

they knew to be a lie? and this too only to please themselves in writing Christian Religion, which of all things doth abominate a lie?

2. *There is no sufficient Counter-witnesse against them,* none ought to be esteemed such but the *first age*, and that affords none, for they saw the things done, and many wrote them, and their pens did but beare witnesse with their eyes; and the rest saw them or might see them. Σὺ μόνος παροικεῖς ἐν Ἰερουσαλὴμ καὶ οὐκ ἔγνως τὰ γενόμενα ἐν αὐτῇ; *Art thou only that one of all that sojourne in* Jerusalem, *that knowest not these things? or though thou dost but sojourne there, how canst thou be ignorant of them?* for *they were not done in a corner,* Luke 24.18.

ner, as Saint *Paul* said to *Agrippa*. They were of a publick cognizance, and notoriously known, which had *almost perswaded him to become a Christian*, which how was it possible, if they had not been perfectly void of all suspicion of falsehood?

For the *next age*, who can imagine, but they would have hissed them off the Stage, if they had acted any thing but true stories? Could the *second age*, which saw not the things themselves, be seduced to believe them, when they were against their worldly interest, and such things, as they which related them, could not prove to be true in an ordinary way, but that they had good

good assurance that they came from God? So that what any raile afterward, is of *too late a date*, to signifie any thing to wise and good men. Who ever of any credit; nay, who at all wrote against Christ, as the Apostles wrote for him? *What they saw with their eyes, or heard with their eares*, as Saint *John*, or καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται, καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου Joh. 1. 1. as Saint *Luke*. *Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and Ministers, of the word.* Luke 1. Christ had three famous Ranks of enemies, and they gave their testimony for him, *Jews*, *Devils*, and *Heathen Philosophers*.

1. The *Jewes* were his sworne

ſworne enemies, and when they brought Chriſt or his followers before Magiſtrates, they accuſed them of *civil ſedition*, or for ſpeaking *that which they then owned*, but not for *forgery*, as we read in the accuſation of Chriſt at *Jeruſalem* by the *High Prieſt*, and by *Tertullus* Oration before *Feſtus*. The *Magiſtrates* though moſt of them had a mind to pleaſe the Jewes, and were few of them ſuch as they ſhould be, yet they onely commanded them to preach no more in that name, but not reproved them for lying, which to have done, would have been as vain an attempt, as the former proved. For they were no ſooner gone forth, but they preached Chriſt, and

and confirmed the truth with miracles, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles.

Besides this, *the Jewes* in their books say so much for him, that they are a proof against themselves of falshood, in what they spake against Christ. They confesse him to have been a great Prophet, and to have wrought miracles, (i.e.) in their opinion, he had Gods witnesse: (Σοφὸς ἀνὴρ εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρὴ. ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής.) And what can any man unlesse malice hath made him mad, say against him, in whose behalfe he confesseth, that God hath born Testimony? But see whither malice will carry one! A man will fall rather then be supported by one

Joseph. apud Euseb. de demonst. Evang. lib. 3.

whom he cauſeleſly hates. If there be not a *New Teſtament*, what will become of the *Old*? *Chriſtian Religion* and the *Verity* thereof is the only proof, that *Moſes* and the *reſt* were *true Prophets*.

2. The *Devils* were notorious enemies, and pretended that Chriſt tormented them before their time with his appearance, and ſpoyled their Devilliſh ſport. Ἔα τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοὶ· yet they confeſſed him to be the *Son of God*, though he ſlighted their witneſſe, if their witneſſe was worth any thing, he had it; if they thought to leſſen him by their teſtimony, the malice of their deſign was a confirmation of his goodneſſe. But why ſhould he own their teſtimony

mony whom he knew to *be lyars from the beginning?* so the *Lacedæmonians* would not have a good saying sullied with a wicked mouth.

But as the *Devils* durst not but give Christ his due, so the heathen world had reason to believe their testimony; for they took the Devils sayings for *divine Oracles*, and as they saw them silenc'd, *Delphis oracula cessant*, so the Oracle told them who did it, as it was breathing some of its last gasps. *Juven.*

Παῖς ἑβραῖος κέλεταί με θεοὺς μακάρεσσιν ἀνάσσων,

Τὸν δὲ δόμον προλιπεῖν, καὶ αἴδην αὖθις ἱκέσθαι.

The *Hebrew child commands me to hold my tongue*

and be gone. Porphyrie the enemy of Christ doth not only confesse the former,

Ὄι ὄι μοι, τρίποδες στοναχήσετε, ὄιχετ' Ἀπόλλων,
Ὄιχετ' ἐπεὶ φλογόεν με βιάζεται ὑράνιον φῶς.

O me! my Tripodes are overthrown,
The true Sun puts out the false one;

But doth also plainly confesse who that Sun was; Ἰησοῦ γὰρ τιμωμένου ὀδεμίας τίς θεῶν δημοσίας ὠφελείας ἔσθετο. *Since Christ was worshipped, we lost the publick benefit of the Gods.* The Oracle which *Julian* also consulted could not speak, being choaked with the bones of a Christian Martyr *Babylas*, who was buried hard by. Had *Plutarch* but minded this, it would have saved him a grea

Euseb. de præpar. Euang. lib. 5. cap. 1.

Lib. de def. orac.

great deal of labour, which he ſpent in vain, to aſſign ſo many fooliſh cauſes of the defect of Oracles. Neither would he have ſo perverted the ſtory, which he reports concerning the howling of the Devils upon *Thamus* his proclaiming, πὰν ὁ μέγας τέθνηκε. The news *of great Pan's death*, as he ſayled by the *Palodes*, it was but a contradiction to himſelf to think any great Devill was dead, and that the reſt howl'd for him, for he eſteemed them immortal ſpirits. But if by that great *Pan* the God of Shepherds, was ſignified, *Chriſt*, the Shepherd of the Sheep, μέγας ἐν αἵματι, *great in his death*, as the Authour to the Hebrewes calls him, (though our Tranſlation perverts Heb. 13. 20.

verts the ſence of the place) who died about this time: They had great reaſon to howle, *for by death he deſtroyed him that had* κράτος θανάτου *the kingdom or Dominion of death*, (i. e.) the Devill. For ſo

Καὶ νεκρὸς ᾅδης γίνεται πρὸ ἐλπίδα,
Πλούτων πονικρὸς καὶ σφαγεὺς ἐσφαγμένος.

He killed death, tormented Hell, and ſlew the murderer. For as Chriſt had before told us that he would, ſo now he did *bind the ſtrong man*, the Devill, *and ſpoiled his goods*, thoſe Tripodes, Images, and the reſt of the Idolatrous Luggage, were his chief houſhold-ſtuff, which he took up & went his way, as *Plutarch* witneſſeth. Καὶ σκήνεια θεῶν σύσκευα σὺν μέρει τὰ χρηστήρια πανταχόθεν οἴχεται.

Ibid.

3. The *Heathen Philoſophers* bore

bore witnesse to him, many of which being convinced with the demonstration of his truth became Christians. *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*, *Polycarp*, *Justin*, *Irenæus*, *Athenagoras*, &c. They were acknowledged *Philosophers*, and whether they were true converts or no, they shewed, for divers of them became *Martyrs*. I may adde to those named before *Origen*, who when the deluge of Idolatry had overspread the learned world; was that *holy Ark* in which Philosophy was preserved for the service of Christian Religion; a sufficient proof of this he gave in the confutation of that railer *Celsus*; for he took off the danger of his blasphemies, and chastised the

bold wit of his lying pen, and ſpoyled the heatheniſh hopes by undoing that fooliſh objection, to wit, *that none but the rude multitude became diſciples of Chriſt*, they ſaw it was not want of learning that made them Chriſtians, for *Origen* had ſo much, that the moſt learned *Plotinus* ſeeing him amongſt his Auditors bluſht, and after a few words abruptly brake off his Lecture.

But why ſhould I go about to reckon thoſe ſtarres, which gave light to this truth? and whereas 'tis ſaid, that there were many others, which darkned all that thoſe miſled Converts could ſay, we may eaſily make anſwer to this.

Amongſt theſe *Celſus* muſt have

have the diſgrace to be named firſt, for he was the firſt that wrote againſt Chriſtian Religion. He denied not the miracles of Chriſt, but would needs perſwade the world that they were Magicall. But as he might learn this of the *Jewes*, for he read the New Teſtament, though to a moſt helliſh end, ſo there he might have learned an anſwer. when Chriſt caſt out Devills, they ſaid it was by *Beelzebub* a Prince among them, but Chriſt does convince them of folly for thinking that a Prince would aſſiſt to deſtroy his own kingdom, and condemns them by their own diſciples, whom they acknowledged to do it by divine power; by which means

meanes they were convinced of saying nothing to the purpose, or else more then they wist against themselves. *Celsus* his design was not only overthrown in words by *Origen*, as appeares in his most excellent books, but whilst he disputed against motion, *Origen* walked up and down, (i. e.) whilst one cavil'd at Christs miracles, the other and his contemporaries did them by his Name and Prayers. So the Disciples of Christ long before by speciall Miracles, (ὑπὸ τῶν τυχόντων) converted the περίεργα μείζονα, those which used Magical Arts, and they burnt their *Conjuring books*. Its most unreasonable to think that the Devils had a finger in this work: for the

Acts 19. 19.

Gospel

Gospel which these miracles confirmed, was their extirpation whereever it came.

So *Origen* having in *word* and *deed*, made a just vindication of our Saviours honour, to cut off all further objection, at one blow (in the second of his books against *Celsus*) sets him this impossible taske. Μὴ πολὺς ἔστω ἀλλὰ μηδ' ὀλίγος ἀλλὰ καὶ εἷς ἵνα δείκνυσι τοιοῦτον, ὁποῖος ἦν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λόγον καὶ δόγματα μετὰ τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ δυνάμεως βιωφελῆ ἐπιδειξάμενος τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐπιστρέψας ἀπὸ κακίας ἁμαρτῶν. (i. e.) *Let him shew us not many but a few, nay but one, such as Christ was, who with the divine glory of his Miracles and powerful wisdom of his holy doctrine did so much good unto mankind, mended the world which lay in wickedness, and*

and of the worſt of men, made ſo many thouſands good.

Arnobius ſeeing them gravel'd with this, made them a great abatement, and put the challenge with this variation. *Poteſtis aliquem nobis monſtrare ex omnibus illis magis, qui unquam fuere per ſecula, conſimile aliquid Chriſto milleſima ex parte qui fecerit! qui ſine ulla vi carminum,* &c. (i. e.) *Can you ſhew us any of the Magicians in any age, which performed but the thouſand part of what Chriſt did? who without any inchantments, juices of herbs, obſervations of ſacrifices, or times, did ſuch things by the power of his great Name? Nothing hurtful, nothing deſtructive, but things worthy of God,*

Diſput. cont. Gent. lib. 1.

God, full of goodneſſe, and help to men, &c.

Unto theſe demands *Porphyry* could give no ſatisfiion, though he took up the Cudgells which were beaten out of the hands of *Celſus*, moved probably with indignation, to ſee the blood of one of his own party run down ſo freſh, whoſe head was juſtly not long before broken by *Origen*. But he reſolved to expreſſe his hatred of the Chriſtian Religion, though he had nothing to ſtuffe his bookes withall, but ſuch railing as *Celſus* had before him uſed, as *Hierom* witneſſeth in his preface to his Commentaries upon the Epiſtle to the *Galatians*. A little after, *Hierocles* thinking

ing the matter but imperfectly done, tried once more to mend it, & he went so far in the way of the former, that as *Eusebius* reports, he wrote again the very selfe-same things which they had wrote before him. Σφόδρα δ' ἀναιδῶς ἐξ ἑτέρων οὐκ αὐτοῖς μομονυχὶ νοήμασιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ῥήμασι, καὶ συλλαβαῖς ἀποσεσυλημένα. *He stole impudently out of their writings not only the sence, but the very words and syllables*, only he attempted to answer the question of *Origen* by naming *Apollonius Tyanæus* whom he would needs put as a great *Antichrist* in comparison of our Saviour, as equalled and excelled by his works. But the answer to him is not hard, for as the things which he opposes are no way compara-

comparable, ſo the evidence of of them is very inſufficient, *viz.* the book of *one ſingle Fabler*. The things were *ſlight*; for though he tells ſtrange ſtories, they go far ſhort of his purpoſe, being ſome *groſſely wicked*, ſundry of them *Magical devices*, many *pitifully inſignificant*, and *ridiculous*, *all* of them of *contemptible quotation* to frame a compariſon againſt *Chriſt*.

Some are *groſſely wicked*, as his offering ſacrifice to appeaſe the Ghoſt of *Palamedes*, and his making prayers to him to lay aſide his anger againſt the *Greeks*, which it ſeems remained ſtill with him in the other world; and that he would give leave, that many of them might grow wiſe and good; *Lib. 4. Cap. 4.*

and

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and yet he himſelf durſt not teach *Antiſthenes*, who deſired to learn of him, becauſe the Ghoſt of *Achilles* forbad him,
Ibid. *Antiſthenes* being forſooth one that uſed to ſpeak well of his enemy, *Hector*. Alſo at the command of this envious ſoul, he went an Ambaſſadour to the *Theſſalians*, to perſwade them to renew their ſacrifices at the
Lib.4. Cap.7. grave of *Achilles*, which at his Mediation they did. A good man indeed, that could find in his heart to offer ſacrifice to pacifie the wicked ſoules of men that kept anger and revenge, after they had departed this life?

Lib.3. Cap. 13. Among his *Magical devices* I reckon his *ſeven rings*, which he called after the names of the

ſeven

ſeven *Planets*, which he wore each *day* differently according to the name of the *Planet*, which the *day* bore. Theſe he received of the *Indians*, whom *Philoſtratus* confeſſes *Magicians*, and tells many pretty ſtories of them, as of *their Tables, which moved of themſelves, and brought in dinner of bread, fruits and herbs, which put themſelves in order, better then any Cook could do. As alſo of their Ciſterns, two of wine, and two of water; one hot, one cold, which came into the Dining-Room of themſelves, and of little pages of black braſs, which mingled the wine with water, and powred it forth, alſo of two Hogs-heads, one filled with water, another with wind, from which they* Lib. 3. Cap. 6. Lib. 3. cap. 3.

ſupplyed the Countrey, with ſhowers, if it was drye, or as occaſion required, with freſh aire, not much unlike to *Homers*, or the *Laplanders bottles*. Theſe things *Apollonius* approved, and makes great hope concerning himſelf, that he ſhould prove ſome-body, being *one that had drunk of the Cup of Tantalus*, that is, communicated with them in their *ſecret myſteries*, as we read in his letter to *Jarchas*, and what he practiſed according to theſe principles, *Philoſtratus* ſets down at large.

Lib. 3. Cap. 15.

Other things were *extremely ridiculous*, as that in his journey to *India*, finding a *dead Lioneſſe that had eight young ones in her belly*, he foretold that

Lib. 1. Cap. 16.

that his ſtay in that countrey ſhould be a yeare and eight months, the Lioneſſe ſignifying a year forſooth, and the young whelps, months. How ridiculous alſo is that converſe, which he pretended to have with the Ghoſt of *Achilles*? he only asked him a few ſlight queſtions concerning *Homers* fabulous ſtories; as *whether* Achilles *was buried according to the relation of the Poets, whether the Muſes wept for him, whether* Polixena *was killed for his ſake, whether* Helen *was ever at* Troy, *and how* Greece *was able to ſend ſo many gallant men againſt it, and laſtly, whether* Homer *knew* Palamedes, *or if he did, why he did not ſet down his diſcourſes?* *Lib. 4. Cap. 5.*

Theſe were the five great queſtions which he asked *Achilles*, the reſolution of ſuch queries did as much good to the world, as a man got with going into *Jupiters Temple in Arcadia*; for when he came forth, they ſaid his body did caſt no ſhadow; for which was he better or worſe? Theſe things thus ſtoried of *Apollonius*, are ſo far from proving him equal to *Chriſt*, that they leave him a great way ſhort of a good man. Did our *Saviour* ſeek glory by ſuch things? did the Apoſtles lean upon ſuch reeds? Or if it be ſaid that he performed ſome things of better note, and particularly ſome great cures; I anſwer, ſo did, and ſo do many *Phyſicians*, that de-

ſire

ſire not to be adored for it. And if he taught ſome good things, ſo did many excellent *Philoſophers*, *Heatheniſh* and *Chriſtian*, which one ſhould fooliſhly compare with *Chriſt*. So that though *Celſus* bragged that many might eaſily appear like unto *Chriſt*, (but named none) and *Hierocles* would needs take this for one, yet we ſee with what little reaſon he did it, as to the things reported.

And as they are not to be named in the ſame day with *Chriſts* moſt glorious *undertaking*, and *performances*; ſo their *teſtimony* for what they are, is *contemptible*, one ſingle *Philoſtratus*, and he confeſſes that what one *Damis* an *Aſſyrian* whom *Apollonius* took up in *Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 3.

his way to *India*, had not very handſomely written concerning his travels; and what *Maximus* a *Cilician* added concerning what *Apollonius* did in the City *Ægæ*, he gathered together at the requeſt of *Queen Julia*, and ſo patched up his ſtory. Alas, what is this to the teſtimony of thouſands, and ten thouſands of *wiſe* and *good* men, that *lived* in the *confeſſion* of *Chriſt*, and *died* for the *Confirmation* of his Goſpel. *Apollonius* his name for all thoſe ſtories outlives his honour, neither could that writing ſupport any great regard of him in the world; and indeed all it comes to is only a doubtfull remembrance of ſuch things as moſt of the world never

never heard of, and the *wiſeſt*, of thoſe that do, deride. *Photius* in his forty fourth book, as alſo in the twenty fourth, hath marked them with theſe black coales. οὗτος τὰ πάντα παραλογώτατα, καὶ ἀπιστότατα διαῤῥαψῳδεῖ ---- Ἀνοίας μεστὰ ---Μῦθοι καὶ πλάσματα ἐς τὸ Απολλωνίῳ κεχαρισμένον ἃ οὐδεὶς τῶν νοῦν ἐχόντων πιστεύσειε.

(i.e). Philoſtratus *gathered together a company of abſurd and incredible things, full of madneſſe, meer fables, invented to pleaſe* Apollonius, *which none of any ſence or reaſon would believe.* And therefore *Euſebius* in his book entituled againſt *Hierocles*, but written chiefly againſt *Philoſtratus*, did juſtly taxe *Hierocles*, who was otherwiſe a grave *Philoſopher*, for the unreaſonable credulity,

which he gave to such odde relations, so insufficiently witnessed, and let him see that *Christians* are not such fooles as he would make them, for believing in Christ Jesus, notwithstanding all that *Hierocles* could gather out of that book.

Left any should make objection against what I have said, as if the *Honour* of *Apollonius* depended not upon the single testimony of *Philostratus*, I shall adde a few words. It's true, there is also a short story related by *Flavius Vopiscus* concerning the apparition of *Apollonius* many yeares after his death to *Aurelian* the *Emperour*, a little before the taking of *Tyana*, and that he charged the Emperour to shew mercy

In Divo Aureliano.

mercy to the *Inhabitants*, *Aureliane, ſi vis vincere, nihil eſt quod de civium meorum nece cogites*, &c. whereupon, he ſaith, that *Aurelian*, though he had vowed, upon their ſhutting the gates againſt him, *not to leave ſo much as a dog alive in the Town*, intending the utter ruine of the place, yet he only killed the *Dogs*, but ſpared all the *people*, except *Heraclammon*, by whoſe treachery he gained the place; and promiſed a *Temple* and *Statues* to *Apollonius*.

If we grant this apparition to have been true, it is no ſuch great matter. It was not the firſt time, that the *Devill* appeared in a *Prophets mantle*. But we may well ſuſpect the *Truth* of it, both becauſe it is not

not mentioned in *Aurelians* letter to *Mallius Chilo*, wherein he gives him an account of the taking of *Tyana*, and why he killed *Heraclammon*, though he ſpared the reſt; when it ſeems utterly improbable, that he would have concealed that apparition, had it been the reaſon of his clemency. Beſides, *Vopiſcus*, though he ſaith, he had this *Tale* from *grave* men, and read it *written in linnen* in the *Ulpian* Library, yet grants that he believed it, the rather becauſe of the greatneſſe of *Apollonius*, which he underſtood from *Greek* books, that is, thoſe of *Philoſtratus*, which are diſcredited already. And confeſſeth in the beginning of his ſtory, that *Junius Tiberi-*

Tiberianus, at whoſe requeſt he wrote it, in honour of *Aurelian*, of whom he claimed kindred, bad him fill it up with lies or any thing, (*Scribe ut libet: ſecurus, quod velis, dicas, habiturus mendaciorum comites, quos hiſtoricæ eloquentiæ miramur autores*) and to take off his ſcruples if he had any, which he makes no ſhew that he had concerning Truth, he told him, that he ſhould not be the firſt that wrote *lies* among *true* things, many other *Hiſtorians* having done the ſame.

I have made no mention of *Julian* called the *Apoſtate*, becauſe I ſuppoſe his dying confeſſion witneſſed to the Truth, that he contradicted before, if that be true, which *Theodoret* relates,

Lib. 3. Cap. 20.

relates, (i. e.) *that he flung his blood in the ayre*, not with a Κύχλωψ τῇ πεῖ οἶνον, *Here Cyclops, drink thy wine*, but with the diſcontent of a conquered enemy, making a murmuring acknowledgement of victory, νενίκηκας Γαλιλαῖε *Galilæan thou haſt overcome*. Poor *Julian!* ἔστοι τὴν γλῶτταν ἐξαναγενηθεὶς βαδίζεις εἰς τὰς τῶν Γαλιλαίων ἐκκλησίας: *Is thy tongue regenerated, and doſt thou thus joyn with the Churches of the Galilœans?* which words he uſed by way of ſcorn, in one of his Epiſtles to *Iamblicus*.

This I have ſaid in part, to anſwer what is objected by the *Heathen Philoſophers*, but if we look a little further, we ſhall find others of their own, more deſerving faith, that blurr'd

blurr'd all the forementioned contradictions with sufficient reproach; by reporting much more against their *own Religion*, in which there is nothiug of worthy mention, but they witnessed against it, (i.e.) their *Gods*, their *Worshippers*, their *Worship*, and the *Motives* of it, which were *fained miracles*.

Of their *Gods*, what sayes the learned *Satyrist* deriding the *Ægyptians* for worshipping *Onions* and *Leeks*.

O Sanctas Gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis Numina! *Juven. Sat. 15.*

O heavenly people! their Gods grow in their gardens.

And *Poliænus* in *Petronius* having killed a Goose which was consecrated to the obscene Idol of

of *Lampſacum*, when the *Prieſteſſe*, or rather *Witch* ſcolded at him, Peace ſaith he. *Ecce duos aureos pono, unde poſſitis & Deos & Anſeres emere, here is money for thee to buy both Gods and Geeſe.*

The forementioned *Satyriſt* ſpeaking of the *Roman worſhippers* having deſcribed their vile manners, by which they were loathſome to all good men, addes.

Juven. *En animam & mentem, cum queis Dii nocte loquantur!*
Theſe are ſoules meet for divine communion, which are indeed fitter to be tranſported into ſwine, then to know divine Extaſies.

As for their *worſhip*, the obſcure *Poet* who it may be wrote

as

as plain as he durſt, ſayes that their *oblations* wanting that which is the *ſpirit* and *excellency* of *true worſhip*.

Compoſitum jus faſque animi, ſanctoſque receſſus
Mentis, & incoctum generoſo pectus honeſto. *Sat. 2. Perſ.*

(i. e.) *Holineſſe of ſoules deeply tinctur'd with vertue*, were to as ſlight purpoſe as could be.

Nempe hoc quod Veneri donatæ a virgine puppæ, (i.e.) *as much as the Virgins received help towards their fruitfulneſſe by offering their babies and puppets to* Venus *at their marriage.*

But this is not all, for the *worſhip* of their Gods and Goddeſſes were full of ſuch villanies, that modeſt perſons were

were ashamed to be present at them, and their consecrated places were filthy sinks of all fleshly lust, as they confesse themselves.

Juven. Sat. 6. Sat. 9. *Nota bonæ secreta Deæ---*
----Nam quo non prostat fœmina templo?

These things the *Christians* did not forget to object to them, *Arnobius* in his fifth book told them home of them. *Quis est enim qui credat honestatis aliquid in ea re esse, quam ineant viles Galli*, &c. (i. e.) *their religious rites were so base, that to name them was against modesty, so full of shame, that they were only to be reproved with silence, and shut eyes.*

And for their *Miracles*, *Polybius libr.* 16. in that *Paragraph*

graph which is inſcribed περὶ τῶ περιτίνεσθαι ἢ ψευδοδοξεῖν τῆς εὐσεβείας χάριν, doth not onely confeſſe that they were invented πρὸς τὸ διασώζειν τῆν τῶ πλήθους εὐσέβειαν πρὸς τὸ Θεῖον. (i.e.) to *uphold the ſuperſtition of the vulgar*; but he ſaith alſo, that thoſe who wrote ſuch things for true Hiſtory, were ἀπλογικίας ψυχῆς, *ſuch as wanted common ſence*, and addes further, ἀθετείσθω, *let them be rejected*. This *Teſtimony* is not more *full* then the *Relator* was *faith-worthy*, for he was ſo great a *lover of Truth*, that in writing a ſtory, he regarded not *Countrey* or *friends*, and for that amongſt other Excellencies was admired by *Cicero*, *Strabo*, and *Plutarch*, as *Cauſabon* hath recorded to his praiſe,

in the *Preface* which he hath written to his noble *Hiſtory*.

So that the *Adverſaries proofs being diſturbed* and *diſcredited* by themſelves, they have no better ſucceſſe in their *evidence* againſt the *doctrine* of *Chriſt*, then they had in the *condemnation* of his *perſon*, (whom the heathen *judge condemned* by compulſion, and *abſolv'd* according to his *conſcience*) for after they had *packed* and *ſtuffled* the matter, when all was done, the witneſſes did not agree among themſelves.

2. As the way of propoſal appeares very credible by what hath been ſaid, ſo ſecondly, *the things ſo propounded, are in themſelves for the moſt part evidently true*. Great Truths

Truths have an innate proof, by which they are apt to prevaile upon mens minds to vanquish unbelief, and chase away errour. The words of the forementioned Historian, as they are recited by *Causabon* in his *Epistle* to the *King* of *France*, are most full to this purpose. *Existimo equidem naturam humano generi veritatem constituisse Numen Maximum maximamq; vim illi attribuisse. Nam cumab omnibusoppugnetur, atque adeo omnes nonnunquam verisimiles conjecturæ à mendacio stent, ipsa per se nescio quo modo in animos hominum sese insinuat, & modo repente suam illam vim exerit modo è tenebris longo tempore obtecta ad extremum suapte vi ipsa vincit* *Præf. ad Polyb.*

obtinetque, & de mendacio triumphat. How fitly did the Historian praise the Truth which he loved?

The Truths of the Scripture like the *Sun-beames*, are their own *Discovery*, but one may contract them into these *two glasses*, wherein we may have a clear *view* of them, and perceive a warm *influence* from thence, falling upon our minds and hearts.

1. The first is this. *They are such things as are most worthy of the Goodnesse, Truth, and Wisdom of God.* What is more becomeing the *Maker* of the world, then its *Reparation*, considering his Goodnesse, which all the world doth acknowledge to be infinite? What more

more pertinent meanes then *Repentance* and *Remiſſion* of ſins? What more can be done but to *forgive* our *Ill*, and *make* us *Good* again? what way to take off our ſins, but his *Grace*, ſince we could never make him amends? And for the way in which he doth it, (i.e.) *Chriſt Jeſus*, why ſhould we make ſcruples, when he hath revealed it? Did the Heathen hope from the *Nature* of *God* (a good ground) and ſhall not we much more truſt in *that* and his *Declarations*, which are indeed the *meaſure* of our *expectations*? For his *Precepts* they are all ſuch as become the *holy* and *juſt God*, full of *benignity*, like the *Father* of the World. It's moſt worthy of

him to teach love, that ſhewes ſo much, and it becomes a Saviour to command his Diſciples to forgive.

If any thing might be cavill'd at, as *contrary* to *reaſon*, becauſe it *ſeems* ſo to *ours*, it is aſſured, becauſe he that made *right reaſon*, aſſerts it: or if ſome great thing ſeem hard to us, who know not the *true compaſſe* of *created* power, yet they are made credible enough, ſince they are ſaid *by God*, who is *Almighty* in his *works*, and *true* in all his *words*, and ſo we are ſecured from the errour of miſbelief, *knowing the Scriptures and the Power of God.*

2. *They are ſuch things as agree with Goodneſſe, Truth, and Wiſdome in us, ſo farre as there*

there is any in us. Since the teſtimony of moſt known witneſſes is the beſt, we have here the moſt proper witneſſe, the correſpondency of revealed Truth with the in-dwelling Truth of our own ſouls. What hath God propounded, but it doth *enable* our *minds*, *enlarge* our *capacities*, *direct* our *choice*, *ſecure* us in the *uſe* of *meanes*? his *commands* are ſuch, as if we *do*, *we live in them*, (i. e.) *find great reward in obeying them.* Obſervance of them makes us happy, in all our conſiderations, and terminates in a *Calm* of *ſoule*, a *true peace of Conſcience*, (i. e.) ſettles us in the faireſt *poſſeſſion* of this life, and by all *prepares* us for an immortal ſtate of Bliſſe, and

wise heathens preferred this before all the world. So *Plotinus* ὁ δὲ ἀγὼν μέγιστος καὶ ἔσχατος ψυχαῖς περίκειται ὑπὲρ οὗ καὶ ὁ πᾶς πόνος, μὴ ἀμοίρους γένεσθαι τῆς ἀείσης θέας ἧς ὁ μὲν τυχὼν μακάριος, ---ὑπὲρ οὗ τῆς τύξεως καὶ βασιλείας καὶ ἀρχὰς γῆς ἁπάσης, &c. (i.e.) *This is the greatest and last strife of soules, in which we are to spare no labour, lest we should lose our part of that best vision, for which we ought to despise all the kingdomes of the world.* How doth this consent to the *Scripture*, whose main design is to fit us for that *Immortality*, which Christ hath by them *brought to light.*

Ennead. 1. lib. 6.

I could wish that *Hierocles* had written alwayes after that fashion, which he does in the end of his *Commentaries* upon the doctrine

doctrine of the *Pithagoreans*, a noble ſect, as *Origen*, that well knew them, calls them, his words are theſe. Τοῦτο τῆς Πυθαγορικῆς ἀγωγῆς τὸ πέρας, ὅλους δι' ὅλων ὑποπτέρους γενέσθαι πρὸς τὴν τῶν θείων ἀγαθῶν μετάληψιν, ἵν' ὅταν ὁ τοῦ θανάτου καιρὸς ἐνστῇ, καταλιπόντες ἐπὶ γῆς τὸ θνητὸν σῶμα, καὶ τὴν τούτου φύσιν ἀποδυσάμενοι, πρὸς τὴν οὐρανίαν πορείαν ὦσιν ἔυζωνοι οἱ τῶν φιλοσοφίας ἀγώνων ἀθλητάι. *This is the end of the Pythagorean Diſcipline, that we may be made all wing for the purſuit of divine things, and that when the time of death ſhall approach, all thoſe that have been exerciſed in the ſtrifes of vertue, leaving the Mortal body upon the ground, and putting off this lower nature, may be prepared for their heavenly journey.*

How

How much these things correspond with the Design of revealed Truth, every one knowes, and therefore I need not report further.

Thirdly, *the Expressions* in which God hath delivered his mind are *plain*, and *fairly intelligible*; his Truths are *perspicuously* laid down before the eyes of men: but here we must distinguish of *Truths*, *some are necessarily* to be known to salvation, *some are not*. Some things being written *ad necessitatem salutis*, and some *ad ubertatem cognitionis*. *All* things in the Scripture are *not plain*; who ever said that they were? Neither are all *plain* things necessary, but nothing which is *necessary*, *is obscure*.

ſcure. There are many things in *Scripture* of which there *is uſe*, though they be not in *themſelves neceſſary*, that are *plain*, and ſome of theſe are *obſcure*, but whatever our ſalvation requires us *neceſſarily* to know, we may know; for there it is plainly revealed. Such is *Faith* and *Piety*, by which we worſhip *God*; *Charity*, and *Righteouſneſſe* which we owe to our *neighbour*, (i.e.) *to all men*; *Prudence* and *Sobriety*, by which we are taught to govern *our ſelves* according to true reaſon, and are directed to the attainment of our laſt end, which is happineſſe in God. And as long as theſe things are made plain in which we are ſo concern'd; we may well

well give thanks to God in the Philosophers words. χάρις τῷ μακαρίᾳ φύσει, ὅτι τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ἐποίησεν εὐπόρισα, τὰ δὲ δυσπόρισα οὐκ ἀναγκαῖα. *Thanks be unto the blessed God, that hath made all necessary things easie, but things more difficult, not necessary.*

These *necessary Truths* are laid down plainly in two respects.

1. *Simply*, and *freed* from all *deceitful Amphibologies*. There is no covering of a *double* mind under *dark* words. The *Oracles* of old were infamous for jugling in speeches equally capable of contrary interpretations. Those which lie and fear discovery, as all liars do, had need speak as doubtfully as they can; but *God* who hath told

told us nothing but Truth, hath done as it became Truth, with *plainneſſe*. The Devills being forc't ſometimes to give acceptable anſwers, of whoſe Truth they doubted themſelves, hid a contrary ſence under the vain ſhew of a promiſe, and put the beſt ſide outward, that ſo their Clients might carry away a preſent comfort, & when the event anſwer'd not the expectation, the *Oracle* had ſtill a reſerve. The poor men, beſides the *undoing* of their *hopes*, *ſuffering* alſo the *abuſe* of their *underſtanding*.

They were deluded as much with the *uncertainty* of *Directions*: they could have no better then the Devill knew how to give, and ſo when the

Enquirer

Enquirer had received his advice, he knew not what to do, becauſe his *Counſellour*, when he gave it, knew not what to ſay.

Secondly, Gods will is plainly revealed, (i. e.) *the meaning of his words is ſo intelligibly offered to all ſorts of capacities, that it requires not ſtrong parts, or great learning, to find it out.* The Lamb may wade into it ſecurely; if any *willing* ſoule ſeek there for what he is *neceſſarily* to *believe and do*, he will find the matters of his *Faith* and *Practice* clearly laid down in *direct expreſſions and familiar conſequences*, which flow as *naturally* from the expreſſe words, as ſweet drops do from an honey comb, not to be *wrung* out with *captious*

tious ſyllogiſmes, and *ſtrained* with *ſubtle art*, which do onely reſolve our faith into *far fetcht conſequences*. Here the *learned* and *unlearned* may *read* and *eaſily underſtand* how they are to be ſaved. Their *Ignorance* is their *ſinne*, that do not *read*, or that *read* they *care* not how. And it is no wonder that ſuch as live wickedly, bring ſuch a diſguſt upon their ſoules, againſt the things here written, that at laſt they neither care to read nor underſtand them, and by Gods juſt permiſſion being blinded, let the Print be never ſo fair, it will not be legible to them, ſon either can a *blind* man *ſee* the *Sun*. That theſe neceſſary Truths are ſo plainly revealed appears.

1. *From*

1. *From the positive affirmation of holy writ.*

2. *By arguments, which are the just consequents of sundry places of Scripture.*

1. For the first sort of proofs we may take notice of that famous place of *Moses*. Deut. 30. 11, 12, 13. *For this commandment, which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it. Neither is it beyond the Sea that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee in thy mouth, and in thy heart,*

heart, that thou mayſt do it.

Theſe words Saint *Paul* applies to the *New Teſtament*, Rom. 10. 6, 7, 8. and it may well be ſo applyed in regard of the *perſpicuity* of the *Goſpel*. For as he ſayes in his *Epiſtle* to the *Corinthians*, *we all with open face behold as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord*, (i.e.) *the doctrine of the Goſpel, and are changed into the ſame Image*, &c. *With open face*, for *the veile that was upon* Moſes *is pulled off*. The *New Teſtament* is a *Counterpart* of the *Old*, written in *fairer letters*. To this Truth, the reſt of the Diſciples bear witneſſe. When our Saviour preached, he made ſuch plain revelations of Truth, that *they ſaw with their eyes, and looked upon the*

Epiſt. 2. cap. 3.

1. John 1. 1, 2, 3.

word of life. And that which was *ſpoken*, is as eaſily *underſtood*, being written; which any body will grant, unleſſe he be ſo abſurd as to ſay, that we know not what our friend means, when he *writes* to us that which we could have underſtood, if he had delivered it by *word of mouth.*

Of thoſe many Arguments to prove this Truth, which are neceſſary conſequents from divers places of Scripture, I ſhall content my ſelf with theſe three.

Arg. 1. The *firſt is taken from the Reality of that love and regard, which God profeſſeth to mans happineſſe in the beſtowing of his Goſpel upon the world*; and that is expreſſed thus: *He would*

have

have all men to be saved, & come to the knowledge of the Truth. 1 Tim. 2.4.
The Apostle in the beginning of the Chapter exhorts to a great Charity, which he would have expressed in prayers for the good of *all* men, and sayes, this is *acceptable to God*, who himself hath a *Love* to their salvation, and to that end *would have them come to the knowledge of the truth*; so that in these words, God gives us to understand that he doth no envie us eternal happinesse, but doth extremely desire it, and hath appointed means for the attainment of it. Therefore lest we should *accuse* the divine *Love* for want of *sincerity*, we must conclude that these means are revealed un-

derſtandably. Would God have us ſaved by the knowledge or acknowledgement of his Truth, and will he not make the *Truth* knowable? but how ſhall we know it, if it be muffled up in dark expreſſions? The *Truth* which is here meant, is the *Goſpel*, and that he hath written in ſuch great *Capital Letters*, that he which *runs may read* the way to ſalvation. Why ſhould God ſpeak to us in an unknown tongue? that which *Paul* ſayes concerning the uſe of intelligible ſpeech (λόγῳ ἔυσημῳ) in diſcourſing of heavenly things, is very applicable here. *And even things without life giving ſound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a diſtinction in the ſounds,*

1 Cor. 14. 7, 11.

how

how ſhall it be known what is piped or harped? for if the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battel? ſo likewiſe you, except you utter by the tongue words eaſie to be underſtood, how ſhall it be known what is ſpoken? for ye ſhall ſpeak into the ayre, therefore if I know not the meaning of the voyce, I ſhall be unto him that ſpeaketh a Barbarian, and he that ſpeaketh, ſhall be a Barbarian unto me. Doth not God know this, and doth he not ſpeak accordingly?

But how ſhall God pleaſe this vain world? ſome are not ſatisfied, becauſe the Scripture is ſo plain, they would have had it compoſed in more artificial guiſe. There is not art *enough* uſed;

uſed, and is there *too much* too? *Lactantius* in his ſixth book *de Vero Cultu*, whilſt he reproves their impertinent folly, who are not pleaſed with the *decent plainneſſe* of the *Scripture*, gives the ſumme of this argument for a reaſon of that plainneſſe. *Num igitur Deus & mentis, & vocis, & linguæ artifex diſerte loqui non poteſt? imo vero ſumma providentia, carere fuco voluit ea quæ divina ſunt, ut omnes intelligerent, quæ ipſe omnibus loquebatur.* (i.e.) *What? cannot God ſpeak elegantly, who made the mind and all inſtruments of ſpeech? Yes, but wiſdom took care, that thoſe divine things which he ſpake to all, ſhould not be covered with ſuch pain*

and

and art, as might make them leſſe underſtandable to all, eſpecially being ſuch things as concern Eternal Happineſſe.

The *ſecond* argument is taken *from the proceſſe of divine Juſtice*, which is expreſſed after this manner, *the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* We muſt take heed how we reaſon with God about his judgements, but he hath given leave long ſince to one to ask this queſtion, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* If God ſet a law by which he will condemn us

Arg. 2.

1 Theſ. 1.8,9.

us to unſufferable torments, if we be diſobedient, doth not righteouſneſſe require that the law ſhould be made known to us, or knowable by us? How ſhall a man be condemned for ignorance, if wilfulneſſe be not added to make it affected? will not that ignorance excuſe, which was invincible without his fault? what juſtice can puniſh a man for not doing that which he could not know? The condemnation muſt needs be hard, when the offendour could not underſtand that the Law was given, or what it meant.

He *which doth not the will of God ſhall be beaten*, ſaith our Saviour. The ſinner replies, *I could not know it*; What ſaith our

our Saviour againſt that? *Thou child of darkneſſe, thou hatedſt the light.* He which would not obey, will not know; that truth which God hath graciouſly revealed, he doth detain in an unrighteous will. The plain notice of Gods law will cut off all excuſes from thoſe which ſhall be condemned for diſobedience

Men may diſpute, but when they are upon their knees, to deprecate the puniſhment of ſin, dare they object to God, *that they could not know his will*? So men ſometimes cavill at God for not giving them grace, and pretend to leave the matter ſo; but in prayer do they make this plea: *Forgive me O Lord, though I did*

did ſin, I could not help it? It is one thing what people may talk careleſly or upon deſign, it is another, what is whiſper'd by a ſtill voyce from an awakened conſcience,

Arg. 3. *Upon the plainneſſe of Gods revelation, depends the certainty of Chriſtian Religion.* This Pillar had need be firm, for the beſt thing in the world reſts upon it. What is acceptable to Chriſt, and what he will do for us, is to be known by the revelation which he hath made of his mind to us; but if that revelation conceal his ſence; it doth not deſerve its name, nor beneſit us. For notwithſtanding the aſſiſtance we receive from it, we are left to *acknowledge* him with *blind conceptions*, to

worſhip

worſhip him with *uncertain expreſſes*, and *depend* upon him with a *very infirm expectation.*

But; O bleſſed Saviour, we have no reaſon to think our ſelves at a loſſe! thou haſt told us plainly of the Father, thou haſt explained the *two great Commandements*, and in them the *ſubſtance* of the *Law* and the *Prophets.* Thy Goſpel holds forth to us all particular duties both of *Faith* and *Love* and *Righteouſneſſe* and *Mercy.* Thou haſt ſhewn us what kind of *worſhip* and *worſhippers* thou doſt regard, having commanded us to *worſhip God in Spirit and in Truth*, with all true apprehenſions and worthy affections; to ſerve God in all good conſcience, and with purity

purity of heart, and haſt rejected the vanities of ſuperſtition, though they be never ſo gay or coſtly, all exteriour ſhews, which want the correſpondencie of inward goodneſſe; ſo that now we may well ſay, *thou haſt ſhewed us men what is good, and what the Lord our God requires of us*, even *to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.* Thou haſt taught us, how in all our religious addreſſes we may come acceptably before the Lord, and what *Mediatour* we are to uſe, we need no longer ask, for thou haſt ſhewed us the *one Mediator* between God and man, and told us for whom he will intercede, *even all that come to God by him*, and make

make themſelves like unto him. Thou haſt ſhewen us how thou didſt converſe with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, and that we alſo upon the ſame terms may become the friends of *God* by *Chriſt Jeſus*, who is *the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever*; ſo that all good Chriſtians may ſay, and conclude they are certain of their way to God, the Scripture having revealed it as clearly as with *Sun-beames*. The *Scripture given by inſpiration is ſo profitable for doctrine, reproofe, correction, and inſtruction in righteouſneſſe, that the man of God*, (teacher or learner) is *perfectly furniſhed with direction to all good works.* 2 Tim. 3. 16.

Now

Now if any ſhall ſay the force of theſe arguments may be avoyded, though the Scriptures be not plain, if we have an *infallible Interpreter* to reſolve their doubtfulneſſe, and cleare their obſcurity. I anſwer. There is no queſtion of that; But where is that *Interpreter*? it is harder to find him, then the ſence of the moſt difficult Scripture. What will be anſwered, if we ask theſe few queſtions concerning him? *What is his name? what Countrey-man is he? where doth he dwell? If his Commiſſion be not in the Scripture, how came he by it? if it be, in what words is it ſet down.*

We read but of *one infal-*

lible

lible Interpreter of Gods mind, *Chriſt Jeſus*, and he hath required of all his ſervants, that they preſume not to take any Maſterſhip in this point. *And call no man your Father upon the earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven; Neither be ye called Maſters, for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt.* Theſe words are juſtly interpreted by moſt learned men as a command of *Chriſt*, directed againſt mens uſurpation of authority to impoſe upon others, what they are to believe. The chiefe *Maſter* in the Schoole of the *Jewiſh Prophets*, had ſuch authority, that no man might contradict what he ſaid, and in this ſence we are to call no man *Father*,

Mat, 23. 9, 10.

Father, but God who hath taught us by him, whom he appointed to be our *onely Maſter*, (i.e.) *Chriſt Jeſus*.

How much thoſe are *deceived*, that aſſume to themſelves to be *infallible guides*, and indeed *Dictators* to Gods Church, hath been ſhewen abundantly by themſelves, and many learned men have forced them to take notice of their errours, and therefore I will inſiſt no further upon this point.

And now we ſee with what reaſon our Saviour cloſed his diſcourſe, ſaying, *If they believe not* Moſes *and the Prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, though one roſe from the dead*. With which I ſhall alſo cloſe the doctrinall part

part of this diſcourſe.

Thoſe which are not ſatiſfied with *Gods* truth ſo fairly propounded in the Scriptures, may pray to *Abraham* to ſend one from the dead to preach to them, if their eares itch for ſuch teachers, but when he comes, would they believe him? No, they would rather accoſt him thus. *Art thou come out of thy Grave to fright us? Where is thy Certificate that thou waſt in the other world? We do not know that ever thou waſt dead; or if thou art a Ghoſt, we know not whether thou cameſt from heaven or hell. whither thy deſigne be to teach or to diſturb us. They ſay good ſpirits do not walk. What? thou*

haſt hid ſome money ſomewhere. If thou comeſt to diſcover any murder, tell us. People talk of Goblins to fright children and fooles, but doeſt thou think that we will leave our profits or pleaſures for a ſhade? That this is too true, we have an inſtance in the *Jewes*, to whom our *Saviour* preached this point. For they had *Lazarus* (whether Chriſt alluded to his name or no) raiſed from the grave, and he diſcourſed with the *Phariſees*; but as ſoon as he aſſerted a truth, that croſſed their humour, they would have killed him, and ſent him to the other world again, a meſſenger of their unbelief. When men have no mind to do their duty, they will quar-

rell

rell with the Meſſenger, and ask for another; not that they will then obey, but to gain a truce for diſobedience, μὴ πώχιον δὲ τῆς μάχης ἁμαρτία, and in the mean time they will ſeek for that which no doubt they will find, (i.e.) ſomething to make themſelves believe, that the next will not be ſo ſent neither, but that they ſhall be able to except againſt him.

Application.

1. Upon the conſideration of the things premiſed: firſt, *Let us be thankeful to the Grace of God, and the care of his divine Providence, for tranſmitting to us the Holy Scriptures*; great *Teſtimonies* may one call them, or high *Courteſies* of that *Providence*? High *Courteſies*

teſies they are, being the ſtreames of that River of Truth, which refreſhed the City of God, (i.e.) his Church ſo long agone. But they are alſo great *Teſtimonies* of *Gods Providence*, when ſo many with buſie eagerneſſe ſought to *damme* them up, that they might not come at all, or to *poyſon* them, that they might arrive as Miniſters of errour and death. Gods goodneſſe permitted not the miſchief, his care hindred it. This is that *Alpheus*, that runs under the earth, dives under the Sea, not mixing with its brackiſh waters, but riſes up ſweet and clear in the beloved *Arethuſa*, unto which God ſends it. When this holy Writ

ſeemed

ſeemed to be ſunk in one place, (as *Ovid* ſpeaks of *Lycus.*)

Sic ubi terreno Lycus eſt epotus hiatu;
Exiſtit procul hinc, alioque renaſcitur ore.

It riſeth in another, and brings up and lands ſafe the Truths which were committed unto it, as Hiſtorians report of the aforeſaid river. If *Moſes* applauded the Jewes happineſſe, when he had finiſhed his *Pentateuch*, ſaying, What nation is ſo happy, whoſe Statutes are ſo righteous? &c. how happy are we, did we but know it, when God hath finiſhed the Revelation of his will, filled it with all neceſſary truths, plainly ſet down, and given us the *Bible* for the

Pandects of them? He hath drawn down his love from generation to generation, and hath made this great instance of it to reach us also. That which is made for great necessities, is kept with equal care. The Sun is not so appointed, that it can be blowne out with bellowes, or that the light of it can be infected with noysome vapours.

2. Secondly, *Let us be content with the Scriptures*, (i.e.) let us be satisfied with what God hath not only esteemed *enough*, but also proportioned to us as a very *bountiful allowance*. These are *perfect and plain*, we need no more; and those which pretend a further want, are not only *phantastic l or deceivers*; but they must needs be

be alſo ſo *injurious* unto *God*, as to ſay that he hath neglected to tell us, what or where it is. Let all ſober minds repoſe here as in their ſafe conduct, and not ſuffer themſelves to be led out of the way either by mens uſurped *authority*, or *pretended revelations*, (i. e.) by *other* mens or our own *private ſpirits*.

By mens uſurped authority, either as *dictating new* things, or putting themſelves for *Infallible Interpreters* of the ſence of theſe writings. All *Uſurpers* in this kind finding it impoſſible to make a *new* Scripture, attempt to make the *ſence*, which is the Scripture in the moſt effectuall name. They would have but

the *interpretation*; why, that's too much of all conſcience. But do they think ſo to get the Soveraignety over our ſoules, and make that an obligation to believing, which was never in any mans power to appoint? *Chryſoſtome* told them otherwiſe in his twentieth Homily upon the ſeventh of *Matthew* (if thatwork be his)

Opus imperf.

Omnis doctor eſt ſervus legis, quia neque ſupra legem addere poteſt aliquid de ſuo ſenſu, nec ſubtrahere aliquid ſecundum proprium intellectum, ſed hoc tantummodo prædicat, quod habetur in lege: (i. e.) *Every Doctor is a ſervant of the Law; becauſe he can neither adde any thing to it, of his own ſence, nor take away any*

thing

thing from it according to his private understanding, but onely deliver that which he findes there. Thoſe which conform not to this truth by him worthily aſſerted may pretend that whilſt they go to God, they permit him to ſit in his Throne, but when others come to them, I am ſure, they ſit downe in it themſelves. If any man tell us what is the plain ſence of the Scripture, we are bound to believe it, not becauſe he tells us, but becauſe it is the *plain* will of God. But if any man ſayes, this is the word of God, this ſence is plain to me, I do interpret it right, and you muſt, and ſhall believe it, this is to make his *own will* to us, what he pretends *Gods* is to him, (i. e.) *a Law.*

When

Contra Crescon. Lib. 2. Cap. 32.

When one had fitted such a yoke, to *Augustines* neck in a letter of *Cyprian*, he thrust it by thus; *Ego hujus Epistolæ authoritate non teneor, quia literas Cypriani, non ut Canonicas habeo, sed eas ex Canonicis considero, & quod in iis divinarum scripturarum authoritati congruit, cum laude ejus accipio, quod autem non congruit, cum pace ejus respuo*, (i. e.) *I am not obliged by the authority of this Epistle, because I take not* Cyprians *letters for Canonical, but I consider them by those that are Canonical; and whatsoever I find in his that agrees with the authority of the Holy Scriptures, I receive it with his praise, but that which agrees not, by his good leave, I refuse*

See

See the improvement of cruell pride? The eager Tyrant cryed for another world to plunder; but theſe men are not content with another of the ſame ſort, they invade the *intelligible world*, commit rapine upon *Soules*, and make havock of the *Church*, to which *Angels* referre but as *miniſtring Spirits*, and *Lord* it over Gods *heritage*, which the *Apoſtles beſought to be reconciled to God*, never *commanded* any thing in their own name, and onely thoſe things, for which they ſhewed *unqueſtionable Commiſſion.*

Theſe Conſiderations made *Tertullian* ſay, *Nobis nihil licet ex noſtro arbitrio indulgere, ſed nec eligere quod aliquis de arbi-* *Lib. contra Haret.*

trio

trio ſuo induxerit. Apoſtolos Domini habemus authores, qui nec ipſi quicquam de ſuo arbitrio quod inducerent, eligerunt, ſed acceptam à Chriſto diſciplinam fideliter nationibus aſſignarunt, (i. e.) *We may not indulge our own will, nor chuſe that which others bring in at their pleaſure: Herein following the example of the Apoſtles of our Lord, who neither appointed any thing of their own choyce, but faithfully delivered to the world, that which they had received of Chriſt.*

There is a Church which calls her ſelfe by a fine name, *The Miſtris of our Faith*, but it is too *imperious* for *Chriſts Spouſe*; for ſhee is, and we know who taught her, and commanded her

to

to be, *meek*; but *uſurpation* needs *cunning*, and cannot ſtay in *moderate bounds*; and therefore the *Romaniſts* deny the people leave to read the Scriptures, which is but a needful artifice, for if that *Screene* were not put up, they would ſee them uſurp their power, and underſtand how groundleſſe it is, and beſides, beholding there the *naked lovely face* of Gods Church, they would ſoon perceive how unlike their *ugly vizard* is to it.

But we are ſecure if we keep here, and if any body talk of ſomething that is not in theſe two Teſtaments, every good Chriſtian may anſwer with *Origen*, *Si quid autem ſuperfuerit quod divina Scriptura*

ſcriptura non decernat, nullam aliam tertiam ſcripturam debere ad authoritatem ſcientiæ ſuſcipi, id Deo reſervemus. (i. e.) *That which is not declared in theſe two Teſtaments, we permit not to be ſupplied by a third; we leave it to God,* who hath made theſe two, *Caniſtrum perfectionis,* (as the ſame *Origen* calls them) *a fair large basket, perfectly containing all that heavenly bread which we need for our ſoules;* and therefore we may juſtly ſay further with him, *Servemus eas menſuras quas nobis per legiſlatorem Lex ſpiritualis enunciat. Let us be content with that which God hath thought enough for us to know, and keep thoſe meaſures, which the Law-giver*

giver

giver hath appointed in his ſpiritual Law, (i.e.) *the Scriptures*. Let us take heed alſo of *Enthuſiaſmes*. What would vain man have? he cares not for theſe *poor ſcriptures*; he would have a *Revelation*, (i.e.) he ſlights the *greateſt Revelation* that ever was. Such men make the ſame uſe of the ſcripture, as thoſe do, who having received a command to pray for divine aſſiſtances, will not pray till they be ſo aſſiſted, as that they cannot well chuſe, and yet will not pray then neither. They will have *divine Revelation*, and when they have, they neither know it, nor are content with it. They would have ſome body ſail *beyond the* Sea, to fetch that which

which is *on this side* already. They are not pleased with what they have *on earth*, till some body go to *Heaven* to fetch it. Alas! Such need not much trouble themselves for a *Revelation*, as long as a *private impulse* will serve. But let us hearken onely to these faithful directions sealed by God for our security; these cannot deceive us in things *necessary*, for they are *plain*, nor can *obscurer* places hurt us, unlesse we be either *rash*, and resolve that shall be the true sence, which we fancy, or else *sordid*, and suffer others to put their sence upon us; for so indeed we may build ill things, not upon the most holy *word of God*, but upon our own *careless mistakes*.

3. To

3. To prevent this, and because the *Scriptures* are not so much the *words*, as the *sence*, *let us endeavour to get the meaning of Gods word*; which to do, is both our *great Duty*, and our *true Right*: For none will be condemned for us, if we believe wrong. It was a noble ingenuity in the *Bereans* that they would not believe *Paul*, but upon search of of the *Scriptures*; and as it would have been a *strange thing* in *Paul* to have offered at the command of their faith, denying them liberty to search, so it is an *ignoble pride* in the *Papists*, or any that follow so unworthy an example, to require our faith upon *their search* of the Scriptures, and

not our own; unleſſe that we ſhould be ſaved by the faith of others, or that thoſe which make us believe wrong, would be puniſhed for us, or be content to have that which they are to believe impoſed upon them by others.

Ambroſe ſpeaks pertinently to this point, *Cœli myſterium doceat me Deus ipſe qui condidit, non homo qui ſeipſum ignoravit; cui magis de Deo quam Deo credam?* (i. e.) *let God himſelf teach me the myſteries of heaven who made it, not man who does not know himſelf; whoſe report concerning God ſhould we credit ſo much as his own?*

Now we muſt endeavour to obtain the *true meaning* of the *Holy Scriptures* by *daily read-*

ing.

ing, ſerious meditation, and the *fervent prayers of an humble ſpirit*. We ſhould *read* with a deſire of that heavenly knowledge, and *meditate* ſo, as that we diſcover not a *negligence*, which is contradictory to true deſire, and *pray* that the divine ſpirit which *indited* them, may *teach* us ſo to underſtand them, that by the aſſiſtance of his excellent illuminations, the wiſdome of *Gods word may dwell plentifully in us*.

It is requiſite alſo that we ſhould abandon all prejudice, and *preconceived opinions*, and bring *candid* and *diſingaged ſpirits*, to the reading of this Holy Book. *Hilary* ſpeaks excellently to this point, *Optimus eſt lector qui dictarum in-*

Lib. 1. de Trinit.

telligentiam expectet à dictis potius quam imponat, & retulerit magis quam attulerit, neque cogat id videri dictis contineri, quod ante lectionem præsumpserit intelligendum. (i. e.) *he is the best Reader that expects the understanding of the words from the words themselves, rather then puts it upon them, and takes it of them, rather then brings it to them; nor compells the words to seem to conteine that, which before reading, he resolved to have understood by them.* Those which contradict this method, may well go away without Gods meaning, for they came not for it.

There is another thing also that does extremely *facilitate* our *proficiency* in the *know-*

ledge

ledge of *divine myſteries*, and that is *ſincere obedience*, and *humble entertainment of the heavenly light*. It is a ſure rule that will never be antiquated, *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.* Whilſt *eager diſputers* loſe the *ſence* of the Scriptures, and their *ſoules* withall, the *humble practiſer* of Gods will ſecures *the ſence*, and *his ſalvation too. He will teach the humble his wayes. The ſecret of the Lord is with thoſe that fear him.* Whileſt we ſhew our ſelves faithfully obſequious to this true guidance, we ſhall not only be led into all neceſſary Truths, but as we do improve in goodneſs, our knowledge will be enlar-

John 7. 17.

Pſal. 25. 9. 14.

ged. The humble and obedient have advantage of all other men in this point, for though they may ſtand upon the lower ground in regard of natural or acquired abilities, God doth ſo love good ſouls, that they ſhall not miſcarry for want of ſuch helps. It were an extreme vanity to think that none ſhall be ſaved, except ſuch as can make *Syllogiſmes*, or that the *Bible* was given only for great Scholars to diſpute on. How deep a *ſympathy* the *meek Lamb* of *God* had with the *fair equity* of this diſpenſation, is excellently ſignified by the affectionate *Apoſtrophe*, which he made to his *Father*, upon the conſideration of it, *I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven & earth,*

Mat. 11. 25, 26.

becauſe

becauſe thouhaſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes. Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. How paſſionately doth the dear *Son* of *God* pleaſe himſelf in the *embraces* of the *Divine will* in this matter? and with greateſt reaſon, for that *will* pleaſeth it ſelf only in ſuch a way as is fully correſpondent to the *divine wiſdom and goodneſſe.* And all *true followers* of *Chriſt* are likewiſe poſſeſſed with vaſt *ſatisfactions* and full *complacence*, ever accompanied with joyful *thanksgiving*, when they are admitted to behold the *rare proportions* of Gods works, the moſt *admirable reaſonableneſſe* of his proceedings. Whilſt men

vainly puffed up with conceits of their *knowledge*, neglect this moſt *neceſſary* and *greateſt wiſdom*, God ſlights their *preſumption*, and paſſeth them by with diſregard, and giveth ſuch grace to the *Humble*, as maketh them *wiſe to ſalvation*; ſo that *This Temper* is not only ſecured by Gods *promiſe*, but is indeed *in it ſelf* the moſt *diſpoſed and qualified* for divine illuminations. *A good and honeſt* heart is like a *ſoile fit* and *prepared* for the *immortal ſeed*, as our Saviour hath taught us. And this is ſo known a Truth, that all wiſe men have propounded *purification of heart as a rare method of attaining true knowledge, and pronounced that the light of God ſhines brighteſt in thoſe ſouls that are purified*

purified with the flames of divine love. Bleſſed are the pure in ſpirit, for they ſhall ſee God. Fogges of luſt darken the *Intellect*, a ſoul ~~ſuppreſſed~~ poſſeſſed with ſin is low, and uncapable. *Diſhonourable affections* cheriſht by a *wicked life*, bring on a *ſottiſhneſſe* of mind, and dulneſſe of fancy.

But I have ſpoken of this *Temper* of ſoul, not only becauſe it doth highly *capacitate* us to the knowledge of God, but beccauſe the *perfection* of it is the true *improvement* of the *Scriptures*, *words*, and *ſence*, and in the happy *product* of it all excellent *knowledge* ought to terminate. All ſpeculation ſeparate from this is contemptible, and leaves a man

man miſerable in the midſt of his contemplations, let the ſubject of them be what it will, even the revelations of the divine will: for *not the Reader, or knower, but the Doer ſhall be bleſſed*, therefore let us take heed, leſt for any *fair ſhew* we loſe this *true ſubſtance*, and inſtead of ſeeming *profound in knowledge*, *great in controverſies*, *Maſters of an opinion*, or any ſuch poor contemptible matter, let us become *true lovers*, and *ſincere practiſers of thoſe* divine Truths, which are here declared by God; *Firſt*, indeed that they might paſs into our *underſtandings*, but with this *principal intention*, that our *hearts* by that meanes might be engaged to a *true obedience* of them.

This

This we ſhall more eaſily perform, if we indeavour, as we ought, to overcome *two great hinderances* (for the things are not grievous in themſelves.)

1. *If we ſtrive Chriſtianly againſt our indiſpoſitions*; this is requiſite, for otherwiſe we ſhall ever and anon pretend impoſſibilities in our duty, and then we ſhall not onely *grudge* at the *performance* of it, but alſo *quarrel* with *Divine Equity*, *Juſtice*, and *Goodneſſe*, which hath appointed us fit duties, ſuch things as in the *matter* are beſt for us, and whereof it hath given *plain declarations* that we may know them, and doth continue *merciful aſſiſtances*, that we may do them. Now if we indulge our

own

own ſloth, we ſhall ſeek grounds of complaint, where we ought moſt to be ſatisfied, and at *laſt* fall into deſperate murmurings, as the diſobedient Jewes did, *We pine away in our iniquities, and thou regardeſt not our damnation. Nay, if our Fathers have eaten ſour grapes, our teeth muſt be ſet on edge for it.*

2. If *we ſtrive manfully againſt Temptations*; which if we do not, we ſhall make *allurements* to *ſin* of *incouragements* to *Duty*, *Gods mercies*: or we ſhall ſeek a *vain refuge* for ſin in that, which is put for *the proof* of our *fidelity*; as every ſtate of ſuffering is, and in both prepoſterouſly frame the reaſon of not ſinning into a

Childiſh

Childiſh excuſe of Diſobedience. So *Adam* began, *The woman that thou gaveſt to be with me, offered me ſome, and I did eat. The woman that thou gaveſt me?* See, how he crooks the Rib again! was it better to have been without her? it was ill to *be alone* before thou hadſt *company*, and is it good now, when thou haſt made an ill uſe of it? The *woman*, that he ſpeaks of after this faſhion, was given him for *a meet help*; and muſt the divine goodneſſe be upbraided with his own gift, becauſe he had perverted the uſe of it? It was the worſt inſtance of excuſe alleaged in the unfitteſt time, for the gift was become an aggravation of the ſin, and the ingratitude ſhould Gen. 3.

have been confeſſed. Muſt all that God gives to careleſs men become of no better uſe, then a *great eſtate* left to a *young and fooliſh heir*? muſt not *God* be *good*, leſt *we* be *bad*? Becauſe men abuſe Gods gifts, will they therefore wiſh that they had never received them? they will,

Quam vellent ſceptris nunquam fulſiſſe ſuperbis!

But what is that to God? they ſhew only that his mercies were too good for them; for they have abuſed them.

And if any *condition* be *afflictive*, we are to look upon the *difficulties* of *duty*, as *ſpurres* to *vertue*, *trials* of our *Ingennity* ſet to *enhaunce* the *reward*, and we are to eſteem them alwayes *conquerable* to good men: for God

God hath promiſed *that we ſhall not be tempted above what we are able to bear*; and therefore we ſhould make that uſe of them; that the Apoſtle doth; *Let us be ſtedfaſt in a well grounded Religion, and unmoveable from the obedience of it, ſince we know our labour is not in vain*, and that the *reward* is no leſſe then *Eternal life*. 1 Cor. 10. 13. 1 Cor. 15. 58.

To conclude briefly, ſince God hath *magnified the word* of his *Wiſdom* and *Grace* which he hath given to us in the *Scriptures*, above any other *Name* or *Notice* of his *Mind or Love* to us, let us take heed. For as the *Heathens knowing God, and not glorifying him as God*, were juſtly condemned to great abſurdities againſt their Natural light, for

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for *they detained it in unrighteousnes*, & Goddid but make that *unserviceable* to *them* which they had, not without great wrong, made *unuseful* to *him*. And as the *Jews* not regarding the *end* of the *Law* lost the benefit of *Law* and *Gospel*, the *Messiah* and *Palæstine*: So those *Christians* which *refuse him that speaks from Heaven*, who hath brought the *last Revelation* of Gods will, which he meant should abide, and calls it ἀσάλευτον; must needs be deprived of the *Great salvation* which his *Gospel* offers, that is, *Eternal life*.

Heb. 12. 28.

FINIS.

Omnia ad ſalutem neceſſaria perſpicuè traduntur in ſacra Scriptura.

SIc inſolenti nempe diligentiâ,
Male curioſa turba, Philoſophi
ſolent,
Audace freti (cui quid invium?)
Tubo,
In ipſa Solis adyta rimari viam;
Secum unde varias, ſi placet Dîs,
auferunt
Maculàſq; faculaſque, quas perenniter
Natare puro in fonte Luminis
crepant.
Sic ille quondam ſapere viſus eſt
ſibi
Belle & venuſtè, dum Sophiſta futilis
Argutiarum machinâ adſtruit levi

Atram esse (quidquid sensus obstrepat) nivem.
Scilicet, ità est ætatis infortunium
Pudorque nostræ, quæ nec intactum sinit
Istud, quod unum est lumine omni clarius;
Istud, quod unum est vel nive omni purius;
Istud, quod unum est omni odore suavius.
Summique Codex Imperatoris Dei,
Quo pacta cœli, quo supremæ Curiæ
Decreta habentur, & statuta cœlitùs
Delapsa, quo vel summa stat nostræ rei,
Impunè non effugit ingratas manus.
Infensa Cœlo turba! cui nil est prius
Antiquitate; quàm ut malæ caliginis
Squallore

Squallore veritatis inceſtent Jubar;
Amabilemq; nubibus rapiant diem.
Adeon' videntur illa plena myſtici
Effata ſenſus, ſenſa plena Numinis,
Obſcura vobis, tortuoſa, nubila:
Cortina quale fudit olim Oraculum
Dubium involutum Pythii ore
Dæmonis?
Nec eſſe cautum generis humani
ſatis
Beatitati, nec ſaluti Civium
Urbis ſupernæ, niſi præterea novo,
Niſi peregrino Jure ſervilem in
modum
Premantur, atque liberum ſubdant
caput?
Ergone quidvis ſic licentèr finge-
re, &
Fabricare centum Fabularum
ſchemata,
Cenſetis eſſe fas piumque; dein
rudi

Populo dare venûm; mucidamq;
Cabbalam
Sic addidiſſe Legibus ſcriptis juvat?
Conchyliatis ſi quis ac Tapetibus
Putrem inficetus adſuat laciniam:
Apage indecentes, apage, nugas
has procul.
Benignus ille Conditor rerum ac
Parens,
Hominumque ſolus qui gubernat
omnia,
Jugiq; fotu mulcet impenſiſſimè,
Nobis regundis Jura non alia tulit,
Voluit nec alios ferre, nec certe eſt
opus.
Excutite, ſiqua forte ſcintilla eſt
bonæ
Mentis relicta, hoc in Theatro
cernite,
(Virtutibuſque Gratiiſque quod
factum eſt:)

(Geſtit

(Geſtit doceri) qualis ad cœlum patet
Sublimis aditus, qualis ad ſtellas via
Acclivè ſurgit igneo tractu micans.
Animus ſui contemptor, & quem ſæpius
Vindex que culpæ lacryma & creber rigat
Pio imbre fletus, advolutus qui Deo
Frequens ſolénſq; gratiam offenſæ rogat:
Quem ſpe beata fulcit immortalitas
Sequentis ævi, teque præeuntem viam
Sequitur anhelus licet & impari gradu,
Te, Jeſu! itineris auſpicem ac ducem ardui:
Quem nec cupido gloriæ, nec ambitus,

Aulæve pompa ; quem nec aſperâ minax
Fortuna tempeſtate tranſverſum rapit :
Quem mentis haud fucata ſimplicitas juvat ;
Quæq; generoſo pectore niveùm enitet
Auguſta virtus ; quem fides circumvolat
Caſta, atque pura labis innocentia;
Quique irretorto vertice ac oculo videt
Calcatque faſtum ſeculi : ſola hæc docet,
Hæc ſola monſtrat ſacra Pagina ; has Roſas,
Liliaque, ſolus iſte Paradiſus dabit.
Ubi quæque ſacro rore gemmat vocula ;
Ubi Roſa Sharon, mille mille floreos

Halans

Halans odores, fundit Ambrosio e
sinu.
O Chara salve Pagina! unicè tibi
Debetur Istud, si quid uspiam fiet
Nostrì beatum, si quid astris addi-
tum.
Iterúmque adeo salve! Ipsa & im-
mensum es Mare
Quo tota, (quanta, quanta sit)
mergi queat
Sophia & reductus sinus es ipsa,
quo Fides
Adhuc adolescens & pusilla luserit.
Fluitas es ipsa Delos & portatiles
Delphi, (sed hìc Apollo non est
Lotias)
Ubi cuisque Mystes sanctus est,
unc & sibi
Oracì quisque prompserit pro re
su:
Oracà cunctis evoluta ambagi-
bus.

Te, ſive Lucem prædicemus;
Fulgida es:
Scatebrámve noſtræ te ſalutis;
Limpida es:
Vidmve ſurſum, quæ una ducit;
Lactea es.

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FINIS.